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JACK WOODFORD **Sex Novel!**

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2

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10-Story Book

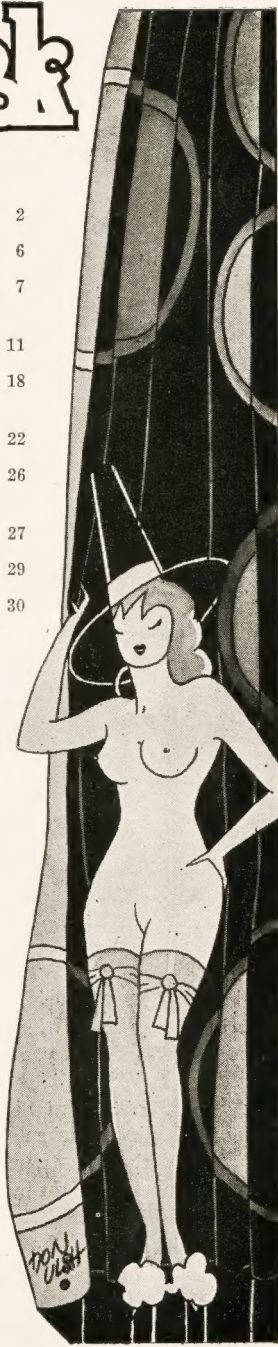
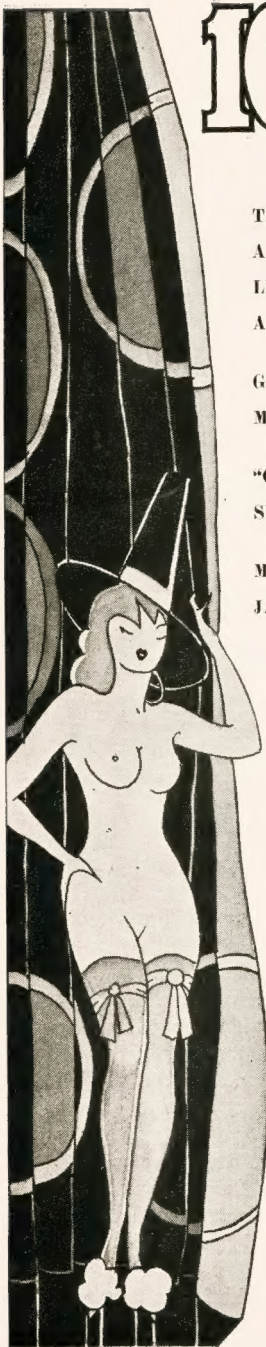
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Cover by John Janeczek

And Jack Woodford's "ANYBODY CAN WRITE A SEX NOVEL"

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OF all the girls at No. 10 Tiang Street, in Tokyo's Yoshiwara district, Katisha was the most difficult to manage. A temperamental Madame Butterfly, she flitted all over the house, just wouldn't follow the rules or stay put, in spite of punishments which were mild because she was fresh, young property that mustn't be marred.

It was specially hard to keep her sitting in the show window when she wasn't working, particularly just after midnight, when her presence there might be most profitable. During the early evening she would sit calmly enough behind the bars of that great gilded cage which opened out to the street to display its living wares, like a porcelain goddess with folded kimono wings, she'd

hum to herself and return the stares of appraising window-shoppers. But around midnight, when a drum beat in the nearby alley, announcing the closing of a cheap little side show or circus out back, a spell seemed to come upon her. The vivid red of persimmon mottled the edges of her cheeks, carefully enamelled pink, and soon after that drum stopped beating she would be missing and if stopped and questioned by the Madame on her way upstairs, Katisha would have a ready excuse about powdering her nose, fixing the cheek enamel or getting a cup of tea, though there was a pot of it standing beside her in the show window.

The squint-eyed old Madame who kept

(Continued to page 4)



MOST BEAUTIFUL LEGS???

Yes—in the entire world says LeRoy Prinz, Paramount's famous dance director. Yes, yes, yes—says the owner of the legs, Laurie Lane. But you—what do YOU say?

Globe Photo.

(Continued from page 2)

all the other girls in constant check was always hollaring, "Katisha! Where's that girl!" or shouting for somebody to go and yank her out of her room, put her back in circulation. One obedient maid sent to rout her out came back scratched and scared. Another reported hearing a strange slithering sound as though a giant lizard was playing tag on one of those paper screens that formed the walls of Katisha's cubicle.

But before Madame could get there to see what was up, Katisha stepped calmly out, trailing her blossom-dotted Kimono down to the shop window and took up her place with the smug smile of the cat who'd already swallowed the canary. On yet another occasion, she was caught with her broad face pressed through the bars of the one tiny window in her cell that gave onto the alley, and then the Madame cackled, "Haha, so that's it! My little birdie would fly away. Not a chance, my girl, no use flapping your sleeves for wings. It'd take an eel to wriggle through those bars, my love."

Next night a maid reported that she had seen a strange man up in Katisha's room, one who certainly hadn't come through the door or paid for the privilege. But she couldn't be quite sure he was human, for he moved so fast, like a wraith, behind a screen, and on looking later, the maid couldn't find hide nor hair of him. The house was searched, but no stranger uncovered in the clothes presses, baskets, big bedding closets or anywhere, so the story went around that, like the boy in the Hindu rope trick, he'd actually disappeared into thin air.

Then Madame's fury mounted to her temples and beat there like that sideshow drum, but instead of an outburst, she set a close watch on Katisha. Her erratic comings and goings were followed and the very next night the Madame was called upstairs in a hurry. She burst like a wild cow into

Katisha's room, leaving a wide rip in the wall screen and almost caught her with that lover who certainly hadn't checked in at the cashier's desk. But how on earth had this thief of love got in? The whole place was tight as a drum, with doormen and bars against any leaks in trade, even private signals from the window-shoppers to the girls were discovered and squelched.

So Madame screamed for her strong-arm koyanagi, a retired wrestler who weighed about a quarter of a long ton and hence made a fearsome bouncer. "Catch that crook! You so-and-so!" she yelled. "He's been poaching every night for a month, and that soon runs into yen."

They beat up the room and floor bedding, looked under and behind everything again, while Katisha drew the skirts of her kimono close about her hips and swung gracefully down to her post with that same satisfied smile. Madame began to shiver with superstitious fear, for Katisha might be entertaining one of those phantom lovers of the old samurai story books, and such unearthly devils are hard to catch and chase away, even with firecrackers. Certainly the girl was such a one who would go running after some unholy, unprofitable intercourse. She hadn't seen a thing, only a flash of something like a floating specter, for Katisha had doused her light and she couldn't be sure what that apparition had been, all she was certain of was that it was so thin she could have stuck her finger right through it. Katisha had jumped in front of the thing and not only shielded her lover but blotted him out, yet the Madame thought she'd heard that strange sound the maid had described before, a sort of scaly scurry up the wall.

For three successive midnights after that Katisha stayed put, except when a legitimate lover called her out, and Madame thought maybe she'd put an end to the whole eerie affair. On the fourth night,

(Continued to page 6)



THE HAT IS LARGE

in order to protect mi-
lady's nether limbs
from the hot sunshine.
No fooling!

(Continued from page 4)

however, the girl was nervous and jumpy, and soon after that midnight beating of the sideshow closing drum she slipped off to her room. And when the Madame could get away from business, which was rushing, she chased after her, arriving just in time to hear that scurring up the sidewall. She let out a shriek as she actually saw the phantom lover trickle like ectoplasm right through those close-set bars. With one elastic flip, like the snapping of a shrimp's tail, his bare heels went through and he dropped out of sight in the alley.

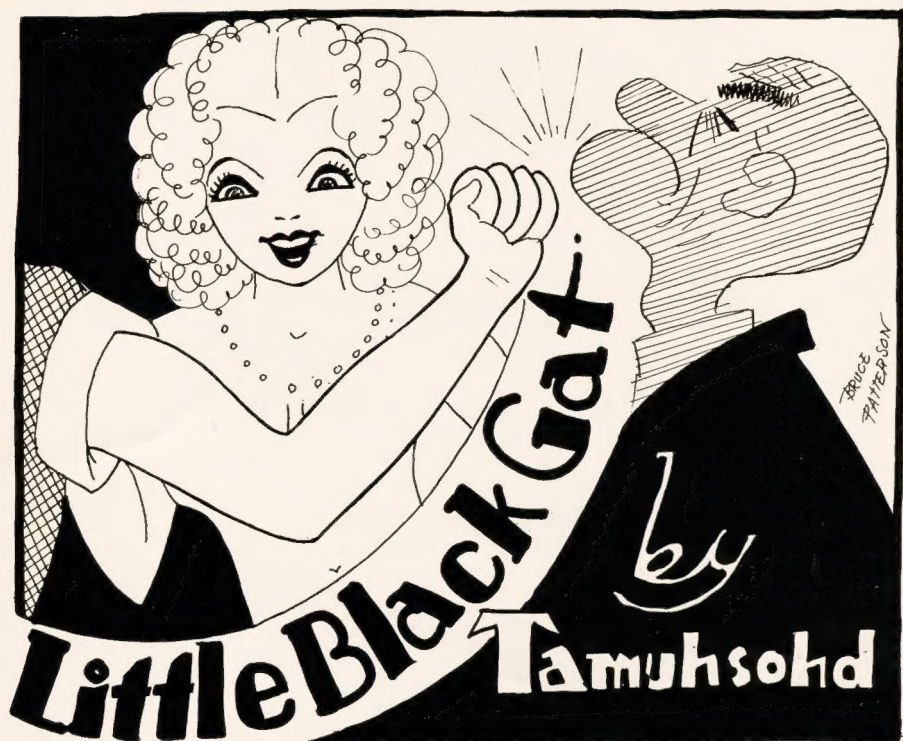
Now she knew this was no ghost, for she'd seen mud on the soles of those feet, and by putting two and two together figured he must be one of those outlandish

freaks from the sideshow. Katisha's secret was out, and that lover who never came in by the front door was quickly identified by the circus owner himself as the Living Skeleton and Human Eel in his poverty-stricken little troupe. It was the Human Eel's function, too, to beat the drum announcing the end of the show at midnight, and in that way he signaled to Katisha whether he'd be right over or not.

There was no money to get out of this wriggling string of a man who trickled in and out through the bars at the witching hour to enjoy those illicit moments of true love, so Madame put a stop to it by nailing chicken wire close over the bars and business went back to normal, without fear of either man or ghost.



I am one of life's tragedies. A plaything of Fate, a slip of Chance. Perhaps under different environment I would have been respected and honored, but Kismet as the Mohammedans say. From Shanghai to Frisco, every dive has known me. My price is not high; that is why I am always available. I hate men, yet they insist upon taking me to their private parties. After I am all lit up they press me to their lips and soon they get all they can out of me. In the hands of the police I fare no better. At the station it is the same story. The treatment there is no better. Every possible name is attached to me. Me, a descendant of a great family tree. It seems that I am in everybody's mouth. Ah cruel fates, judge me not. Justice shall triumph. Yet I go on in spite of slander and mistreatment. I cry that it is unfair, even though I am a cigarette.



YOU know? Little change o' pace offering? Not any weight-class stuff though—not much, that is. Probably twenty pounds or so! Not any more'n 'at. 'Cause this little goldilocks frill's 'bout a huner'n ten, see? My own ninety pounds o' Brunette dynamite's just nothin' over ninety. I mean my little black Fanny 'at carries a little black gat. Boy!

Well, I'm just a comin' from the alley when I meets this little broad. I'm not tired. I'm fresh. And I don't mean "on-the-make" fresh—just not pooped, 'at's all. And the evening is still yet only a pup. Just a cub punk.

When I lams this little jane, I knows right off she's my confection. I don't care

much if she really falls for me either—she's so damn sweet, if you get me—an' I'll be hopped enough if the little drop o' nectar maybe will talk to me. Or, if we could snitch a few truckin's. This last is plenty in the air, see, because I don't know no public dancin' spots 'at I'd wanta take this wren to. She ain't no street-walker nor not no golddigger even—I don't fool with any of that kind ever. And if you don't, you're not going to pick up a rib of any sort very often—ain't that the low-down?

Well, this little goldilocks, when I cracks wise at her, looks scared as hell at first. But I really was lonesome—my Fanny's out o' town, see? So, when I tells this blue-eyed

(Continued to page 9)



THE GODDESS OF GRACE herself, Lillian Ellis, winner of a recent "gracefulness contest" held in New York. And if you don't think sitting on one elbow and the end of the spine takes "grace"—try it, sometime, while a dozen photographers use up a half dozen hours posing you!

Century Photos.

(Continued from page 7)

baby 'at I'm lonesome, and won't hurt her none, and all that, she falls for old louse me and admits that she is, too. Boy! Was I treadin' the ether!—just a floatin' like a poor half-cocked punch drunk has-been, you might say. I asked her first off if she ever guzzled suds. She laughed. A tiny little tinkle like some o' that swell songbird stuff 'at a toughie don't know nothin' about, only likes it anyway? You know.

She keeps a laughin', keeps a handin' me that sweet music. Better'n any radio program. Better'n any talkie show, see? Because 'at little knockout's right there in person 'ith her little hand right on my bundle o' biceps. And that laughin' don't hurt her looks none, neither. I'll tell you what: when that rosebud under her pretty pug nose pops open? Wow!—they look like nice rocks, they sparkle like unset pieces o' ice laid out on a little piece o' red velvet. I don't know what the hell she's laughin' at, but how could I be sore! I ain't.

"What's so funny, babe?" I cracks down at her 'ith a big grin on my mug—we're already started walkin' for the nearest decent joint I know. She laughs again and says:

"The way you talk." And snuggles up to my arm and pipes, "But I like it, though. I love it—think it's darling. It's so different, really!"

So I don't try to change my chatter—don't none—don't try to talk like no sissy school-teacher even if she does talk that way. It's cute for her to, but it'd sound goofy as hell for a wrasler, even if I am only a light-weight and not so hot at that. I did though put the old strangler hold on my gutter stuff. I didn't talk sewery, didn't even swear . . . much.

I'm so proud o' this little cutie that I take her up to the bar 'stead of into a booth. We get a couple small ones, and was ever'body lampin'! I'll say: I could see 'em in the mirror and ever' time I turn any, I can see 'em cranin' their ugly pussies out of the

booths 'cross from the bar. I was about startin' to look for a booth for us when I heard a pop and a little squeak and in the mirror I see what'd happened. I steps around my little blonde broad, and sticks my mug up plenty close to this wise guy's dirty map.

"What's a idea, homely?" I cracks, "Lookin' for one o' them in the puss? It won't be with no *open* fist, you know." With that, he just sticks his lousy button out and laughs. He ain't drunk, see, and he ain't no sissy, neither. He's just one o' them wise gazaboos. And he's as big as I am. Otherwise maybe I wouldn't a done what I done. Oh, I might, because I was a burnin' plenty—him a ploppin' my little cutie that way right on one of her cutest little curves. And then standin' there a leadin' with his chin, laughin' right in my face? Imagine!

So I let him have it. His head back that way, it was one clean shot. And did I take it! He asked for it, and I give it to him plenty. I really socked that bird. It was a old-fashioned haymaker. I got it from down near that tile floor and he got it square on the button—a swell old-fashioned uppercut. I don't know if his can hit first, or his head—probably his fannie, because a guy like that is too dumb to be hurt in the head, all his brains, what few, bein' down below, see? Anyway he was plenty cooled. He was o-u-t out cold as the heart of a gang moll.

Nearest barkeep comes around our end, says, "Better find a booth, you two!" 'Nother waiter comes and helps him, and they find a booth for smartie. Little while same outside waiter comes to our booth an' sticks his head through the curtains. He's grinnin' like Joe E. Brown. "He's all right now. Doesn't know what happened. Boy! watta socko!" I ordered some beer and turned to my little peaches. She's still a shakin'. I put my arm around her and told her nothing could happen now.

"My," she said, "but you're strong!" Her eyes as big as them pansy bowling

balls, see? A sittin' so close that way, and that whole bankroll o' spun candy tilted back. Cute and pretty both. You know? Well, I couldn't help a kissin' her. Right on them claret-colored featherweight lips. And she put her soft little arms around my rough neck and kissed me back plenty—just nice though, see? Well, just then our beer comes, and I heard the waiter say, "Oh, oh!" but as I looked up he changed it to some lily crack like, "Excuse me, please!" And did he scam! He wasn't lookin' for any of them wallops—he'd seen a sample.

Well, that didn't have nothin' to do 'ith it, and the night was still young, but I see she's still nervous, so I says let's go to my little joint where you can feel safe and where we can be alone. "Where is it?" she wants to know; so I tells her it's just around the block apiece, but I'd call a taxi if she wants.

"Oh, no, I love to walk." So we did—after I'd kissed her again. And I just comes one o' takin' her int' the beer joint next door to our downstairs. Boy, was that a close nip for me! For the both of us! Reason I wanted to go in there was to show her off. Reason I didn't do it? I'll explain that in a minute.

So, we went on up and I orders some beer by phone an while we're waitin' for it she gets lookin' over my pitchers—you know, trainin' camps and different poses? Even some bowling shots. "My," she cracks again, "but you're strong."

"Yeh, it's the horse reddish in me," I says.

"The what?"

"Oh, skip it, sugar," I says. "About me being tough, 'at's my racket." (Tryin' to be modest, see?) "I gotta be hard—'at's a way I make my cakes."

"Your what?" she asks—just a innocent as all hell, 'at innocent little doll!

I explained, I means my dough, my groceries, my little flop-joint rent.

"Oh!"—and she trickles off into that perfect high-C laugh again. I kissed her, and made her do it some more. Did I love that laugh!

The waiter 'at brings this beer has known me a long stretch, see? He's always been on the up-and-up with me. Maybe it's part because he knows I got a poison punch—and because he knows my regular sweetie 'at lives with me carries a gat, and is plenty tough with it if she is only a little less than fly-weight. Only she's out o' town—did I tell you? . . . But I don't think so. I think he's just a nice boy 'at 'tends to his own business, see? Only he don't like Fanny—get that!

"How's tricks?" he asks me, and I tell him "okay." He seems a hangin' on the door knob a little, and he ain't lampin' little goldie none—just kinda fiddlin'. So, knowin' he's a right guy, and a wise one too, I steps outside in the hall, and says: "Spill it, big boy! What's on your mind?"

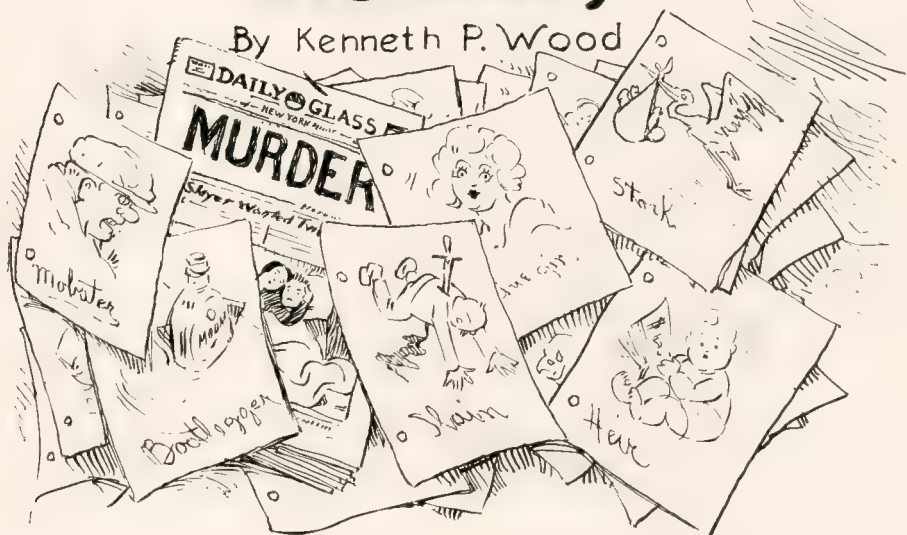
"Well," he says slow like, "it's none o' my business, but . . . did you know your . . . I mean did you know that Fanny is back?"

"Great HELL, NO!" I howls . . . "Thanks!"

And did I get that baby out o' there? And did I take a long road-work inhale of the good old ether once I had this little broad clear around the block and we're grabbing a taxi? Because being strong that way wouldn't do me any good, and wouldn't do little goldie any good either, see? Not with that 90 pounds o' dynamite called, Fanny. For whenever she gets a burnin', she's plenty poison. She and that little black gat 'at she carries. And bein' runner-upper contender for the women's female lightweight champeenship o' the world don't do me no good, see—not against one o' them little black gats!

A Tabloid Newspaper Glossary

By Kenneth P. Wood



ONE of the characteristics of the tabloid newspaper is that while it usually says what it means, it does not always mean just what it says! It has a system of phraseology peculiar to itself. Many of the words one sees in a daily journal really are in the dictionary, but the average news-scribe is a man of broader linguistic views than the editors of dictionaries. Therefore, a person who would read his tabloid newsprint intelligently must familiarize himself with the idioms, some of which have been collected and are given below:

YELLOW—According to the tabloids, a jaundiced type of journalism employed by all other newspapers.

MOBSTER—Any person wearing a cap, when arrested on a charge of assault and battery.

INTERNATIONAL DOPE RING—Handful of small-time ex-bootleggers of various nationalities arrested for peddling marihuana cigarettes.

BANDIT—Person guilty of crime against property for which the penalty is more than ten days in jail.

WUZ—Synonymous with "was," but indicates dialect.

GANGSTER—Synonymous with "mobster." See above.

BOOTLEGGER—A few years ago, any person guilty of carrying a pint of untaxed liquor. Now "almost" obsolete.

SLAY—Synonymous with "murdered"—abbreviated form for headlines.

RACKET—According to the police, any type of business in which they do not receive a cut-in.

CRISP TEN-DOLLAR BILL — Ten dollars.

RUBBED OUT—Variation of the absolute verb "murdered."

MULTIMILLIONAIRE—Person possessed of property worth fifty thousand dollars or over, or a relative of a person listed in the Social Register. Before the World War, "millionaire" was used in the same sense.

ATTRACTIVE GIRL—Any unmarried human female less than thirty-five years of age who gets into the news.

PROMINENT — Descriptive adjective applied to plumbers, chiropractors, and sit-down strike leaders.

SOCIETY DEBUTANTE — Synonymous with "attractive girl"—see above.

PROMINENT CLUBMAN — Any male wearing a boiled shirt, arrested for any offense above a misdemeanor.

SOCIETY MATRON—Any married woman, from a bartender's wife up through the social grade who happens to get into print.

COLLEGE GIRL—Any woman who has ever been to school.

WELL-DRESSED — Phrase always applied to a woman who, when arrested, is comparatively clean. Must be used in connection with "prominent clubman," q. v.

HEIR—Child having three hundred dollars coming to him from a life insurance policy.

GLOBE TROTTER—Any person who has been to Atlantic City, New Jersey, Keokuk, Iowa, or Palm Beach, Florida.

PROMINENT CLUBMAN — Any bachelor leasing apartments at twenty-five dollars a month and upward. Also members of "political" clubs who happen

to be arrested while wearing a dinner jacket.

NOT EXPECTED TO RECOVER—Phrase applied to the condition of all persons injured in the course of a news story.

HURLED — Motion of passengers, cars and cabs at the time of the accident.

FAINT—Course taken by all women within six blocks of the accident.

PLUCKY WOMAN — Any woman who did not scream.

WILD PANIC—Inevitable result of the accident.

SCREAM—See "faint"—above.

DASH—Gait of the crowd at the time of the accident. "Rush" is synonymous. "Run" is not good usage.

FATALLY INJURED—See "not expected to recover," above.

COZY—Adjective always applied to the home to which the remains are taken.

HEROINE — Principal female character in any burglary story. Otherwise synonymous with "plucky woman," q. v.

THIRTY-TWO CALIBER, PEARL-HANDLED — Phrase which must always be attached to the noun "revolver" unless otherwise ordered.

RING OUT—What shots always do.

GEMS — Personal ornaments worth more than one dollar and seventy-five cents.

BOUDOIR—Any bedroom the rent of which is more than two dollars a week.

HAVOC—A good word to use almost anywhere.

HURTLE—Verb used of motion of any falling object, especially a brick or a suicide.

ALLEGED—Must be used frequently by rewrite men when in doubt, or, when twisting up the facts of a story to avoid a libel suit.

FASHIONABLE APARTMENT

(Continued to page 35)



**MOST PIQUANT
"FACE OF
THE MONTH"**

—or, don't you subscribe to the new Face-of-the-Month Service? Well—here's the first face free!

Globe Photo.

Writing, Publishing—Debunked!

Anybody (bar no Woodford Can

SEX

By JACK
Successful Author
lished Sex Stories

DEAR—and gentle!—reader, there is no kind of writing easier to accomplish—or to place, than the sex-novel. Whether you are ready for it or not, you can start a sex-novel *right now*, and if you follow the simple directions I give you, I guarantee that you will get a novel done; its chances of getting sold will be ever so much greater than your chance of getting short-stories sold; because in both the ordinary and sex-novel field the competition is far less keen. For some reason or other the amateur, who ought to view short stories with fear and trembling, is afraid of the novel form instead. Few amateurs ever write novels at all. There is a bale of short stories turned out every time the clock ticks, I'm sure; and Eastern editors

will have them on their desks shortly. Most of this stuff is written by those who have taken all manner of silly courses in short-story writing and become all slewed up in millions of cubic feet of farcical technique; without the technique, many of these short-stories might be salable if enough magazines could be found to buy them. But in most cases courses in writing are an absolute guarantee against the neophyte's writing salable fiction, unless he is indomitable and had unusual knack before beginning the course.

Nevertheless, these graduates of simp seminars glut, jam and pack the short-story markets the year around to the point where editors every year read less of that material sent to them by new

body) Says Jack Write and Place a

NOVEL

WOODFORD
of over 2,000 pub-
and 40 Sex Novels

writers.

But not so of the sex-novel. Many of the most successful free lance short-story racketeers won't write novels. They feel that there is not sufficient in the venture to justify the time used. I am being dangerously frank now, and you may be discouraged; if you are, thank me for having discovered to you that you are not fit for this racket. I will have delayed you less than most writers of books for potential writers, in finding that occupation where you will be best adjusted.

For even a bad short-story, a Big Name slick paper writer can get somewhere between five hundred and fifteen hundred dollars—often more. It depends a good deal on his agent. A few years ago it was

frequently more; but now a good high price would be about fifteen hundred dollars. I can write a five or seven thousand word short-story, from scratch, and have it in the mail two or three hours after making up my mind to do it. I have written as many as three or four of them in a day, and sold all of them. Better slick-paper racketeers would take somewhere between five days and five weeks to write a five to seven thousand word short-story. For which they would get fifteen hundred dollars—perhaps!

Such a racketeer would need as many times five days to five weeks to write a novel, as the number of words in the novel are times the number of words in

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(Continued from page 15)

the short-story. If a novel sells only five thousand copies, the author will make from twelve hundred to fifteen hundred dollars out of it!

So, you see, when you strike out in the novel form, you step out of amateur competition on the one hand, and out of sharp shooter competition on the other.

Not, you understand, that there is an actual dearth of novels. But there are about a thousand short-story writers of every sort writing short-stories for every one that is accepted. Three young men of my acquaintance wrote their first novels in 1936. All three of them sold their novels. Several persons I know wrote their first short-stories during 1936; not any of them, so far as I know, sold a story anywhere. The greatest reason for their failure to do so was their neglect to have any definite idea, when they wrote their stories, where they were going to sell them—and they were not, then, shaped toward any particular market. If you write short-stories that way, don't waste postage on them.

These three young men are between twenty and thirty. The oldest one is twenty-nine. They had never written anything before. All three of them got advances on their novels; that is, the publisher, in accepting them, gave them several hundred dollars in advance of royalties. Astounding as this may seem to you, it is a common practice with publishers; though they will be ever so much pleased if you do not ask for any advance royalties. If you do, and get them, you may be embarrassed later if the publisher fails to get his money back—but then . . . that's one of the many chances you have to take.

Of course there is every imaginable sort of novel; and there is every imaginable definition of the novel form on the part of masterminds and obfuscators and

professional describers and classifiers of every yogi. I will so much as say that a short-story is a story that is short; a novel is a story that is long. And a story is anything in Christ's world that you say is a story.

There is the tightly plotted novel, which starts off with a narrative hook, just as does a well written commercial short-story; goes on through chapters of complication and suspense (sadism) and ends with a surprise, or in a way to satisfy the reader.

There is the novel, like Mr. James Joyce's "Ulysses," the greatest novel written in our times, that starts nowhere, just as does life; sprawls around in every imaginable way, just as does life, and ends nowhere; just as does life. You will probably never write a "Ulysses," any more than I will, because in order to do so you would have to be an undisputed genius, and if you are you will have known all about it by this time without experimenting. And, anyway, nobody could teach anybody to write a novel like that. Mr. Joyce might spend his entire lifetime trying to teach a son how to do it and get nowhere.

But the other sort of novels—the sex-novels—the kind you read for three cents a day at circulating libraries; the kind, like "Bad Girl," that romp into sales of a hundred thousand or more—and go, consequently, forthwith into the movies; they are the easiest possible thing to write—that is, in the line of creative fiction. Many would question my use of the word creative in this respect; and I beg their pardons. I probably ought to find a better word, but why should I bother? You'll understand, if you're the sort I wouldn't want to misunderstand.

I suppose the reason why beginning writers are so afraid of the novel is that it seems to them such a lot of words all

(Continued to page 36)

GREEK

A One-Act Play



Studio of Praxiteles, a sculptor. Doorway at middle rear open to the street. Over door facing audience is large sign:

PRAXITELES

General Sculpting and Monumental Works

TOMBSTONES A SPECIALTY

Room is barely furnished with a model's stand, bench and table, and a cupboard in which are a few jugs and earthen cups. A ladder is adjusted by the door under the sign. Praxiteles is on the ladder fixing the sign.

ENTER DORIS, a young woman.

DORIS: Praxie!

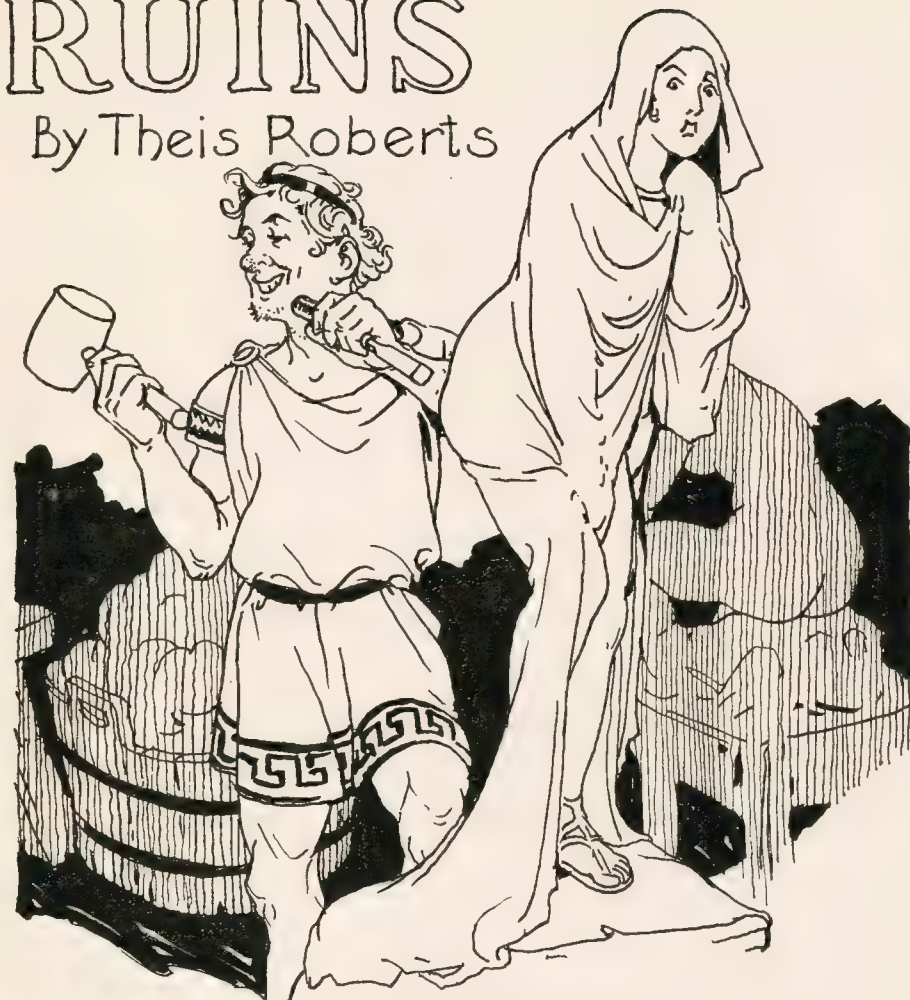
Praxiteles: What are you doing here? If your husband catches us together there will be trouble, and the Gods know I have enough worries as it is, what with this depression and one thing and another. As you observe, I am now forced to advertise. These democracies are like the new antiques people buy.

Doris: How's that?

Praxiteles: Not what they're cracked

RUINS

By Theis Roberts



up to be. But there you go changing the subject again. What about your husband?

Doris: Agamemnon?

Praxiteles: Yes! Agamemnon!

Doris: Oh, that's all right. He's away on business somewhere. Don't worry. Anyway, I just dropped in to see if you'd be kind enough to make a bust of my foot. Achernon told me I had the prettiest feet in Athens. Don't you think so, Praxie? *(She lifts her gown to display her legs.)*

Praxiteles: You might pose for a sandal advertisement for George White. George

White's Sandals. "You just know they don't wear 'em." But stop changing the subject all the time. You want me to make a bust of your foot?

Doris: That's what I said.

Praxiteles: I can't do it.

Doris: Why not?

Praxiteles: I'm a sculptor, not a plastic surgeon.

Doris: I think you're mean. But if you won't, you won't. And I must be getting along.

Praxiteles: And there's another reason

I can't do it.

Doris: What's that?

Praxiteles: We are all specialists nowadays. A chiropodist might help you, but I can't.

Doris: "What's your specialty?"

Praxiteles: I'm the big buttock and leg man! Good-bye! (*Doris starts to go out of door, but turns immediately terrified.*)

Doris: Zeus protect us! Here he comes, and I think he's coming in here. Is there a back door, or another way out? Hurry up! Think of something. Don't perch up there like an old buzzard. Where can I hide?

(*Praxiteles descends slowly from the ladder.*)

Doris I'd be away on business this afternoon. She's all right, but I can never have any fun when she's around. You're only a bachelor so you can't know what wives are like.

Praxiteles: Don't I though!

Agamemnon: Where's the rest of the crowd?

Praxiteles: They'll be along any minute. Phryne, my new model, is out getting the wine. You haven't met her yet, have you? She's a knockout. Best girl I ever had. Poses like a dream and makes a nectar that's got a kick like a centaur.

Agamemnon: A centaur?

Praxiteles: My mistake. Four centaurs and a Persian mule.

In Every Issue of **10-STORY BOOK** **A ONE-ACT PLAY**

Praxiteles: No, there's no other way out. I must attend to that someday. What are you shouting at me for? Who it is?

Doris: My husband!

Praxiteles: Agamemnon?

Doris: Yes, the snake! Why can't he stay put for five minutes?

Praxiteles: Here. You can be a statue. Get on this stand and I'll throw a sheet over you. Remember to be perfectly quiet and still, no matter what happens.

Doris: All right. (*Praxiteles throws sheet over her.*)

Praxiteles: There!

(*ENTER AGAMEMNON.*)

Praxiteles: Hello, Agamemnon.

Agamemnon: The same to you, old timer. Am I in time for the party? I told

Agamemnon: What's that under the sheet?

Praxiteles: That? That's just a new piece that I've been making.

Agamemnon: Can I look at it?

Praxiteles: Later on. Here comes Phryne with the wine. Put it on the table, my dear, and come here. I want you to meet Agamemnon, a generous patron of the arts. Phryne, Agamemnon, Agamemnon, Phryne. Be nice to him, Phryne. Pour out the drinks, you two and sit down while I fix this sign.

(*They all have a drink and Phryne and Agamemnon sit close together on the bench. Praxiteles refills his cup and slips it under the sheet to Doris, who downs it hastily and resumes the pose. Phryne and Agamemnon*

are commencing to have a petting party on the bench.)

Agamemnon: I think you're wonderful!

Phryne: I'm glad you like me (*Snuggles closer.*)

Agamemnon: Oh, boy! If my wife knew what I'm doing now! I almost wish she were here. She might learn something, the old chunk of ice.

Phryne: Oh, are you married?

Agamemnon: Yes. But my wife doesn't understand me. She likes literature, but I prefer works of art like you.

(Doris shakes her fist at him. Praxiteles picks up his hammer and chisel and starts working on a block of stone near Doris.)

Praxiteles: Keep stiff.

Agamemnon (*a little drunkenly*): Whoosa stiff?

Praxiteles: I said I was a little stiff in my joints.

Phryne: You always are. Keep away from them.

Praxiteles: From what?

Phryne: Joints.

Praxiteles: Some nectar!

Agamemnon: I don't care if they did. She knows her stuff.

Praxiteles: What are you talking about? I want Phryne to give us some of that nectar she makes.

(Phryne gets another jug and pours drinks for Praxiteles and Agamemnon. They drink. Both sputter and cough a little as it goes down. Agamemnon takes chisel and hammer from Praxiteles and goes over to Doris.)

Agamemnon: Wow! What a drink! Even statues are beginning to look good to me!

(Points chisel at rear end of Doris, lifts hammer and says):

I'd like to take a crack at this myself.

Praxiteles: Put it down. You handle it like a can opener. Stop it. You'll make another Greek ruin out of her.

Agamemnon (*drunkenly*): Oh, please. Just one little chip off the old block. One teentsie, weentsie wallop. Here goes!

(Praxiteles grabs his arm but not before the chisel has poked Doris slightly. She yells and jumps a little but resumes pose immediately. Phryne is frightened, gives a little scream and runs out.)

Agamemnon: By the gods! What is it?

Praxiteles (*confidentially*): That isn't a statue at all.

Agamemnon: What is it then?

Praxiteles (*more confidentially*): It's somebody else's wife!

Agamemnon (*laughing*): Somebody else's wife?

Praxiteles: Sure. I was going to introduce you when Phryne came in, but Phryne would have been jealous and made a row. You know how women are.

Agamemnon: That's a good one! And I was going to take a crack at somebody else's wife! Tell you what I'll do for you. I'll let on it's a statue I've bought from you and carry her outside for you. How's that?

Praxiteles: Fine.

(Agamemnon picks up Doris over his shoulder and starts out the door as Phryne re-enters.)

Phryne: What's that you got there, Aggie?

Agamemnon: Somebody else's wife. Oh, ho!

Phryne: Oh. Ho! Where are you taking her?

Praxiteles: Down to the grounds.

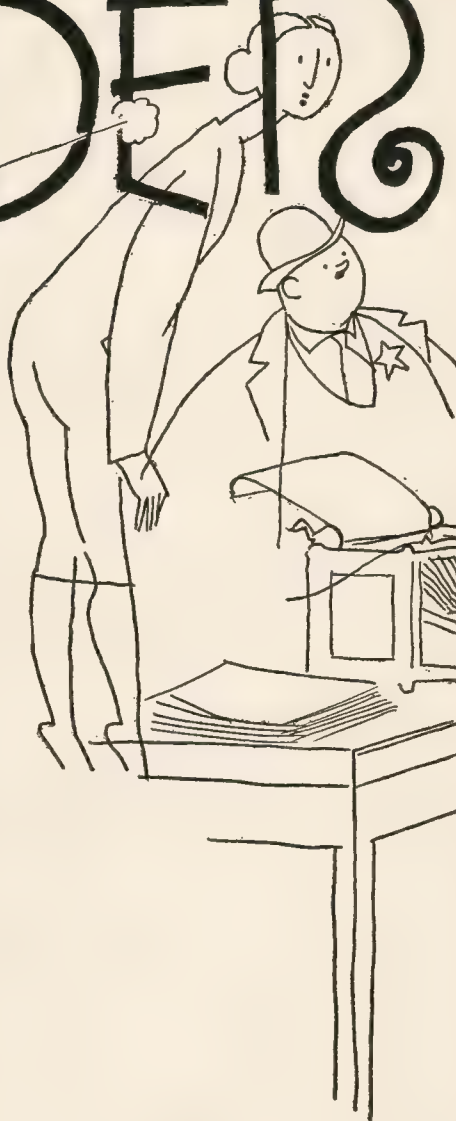
Phryne: What grounds?

Praxiteles: The old statutory grounds!

BLACKOUT, CURTAIN.



MURDER?



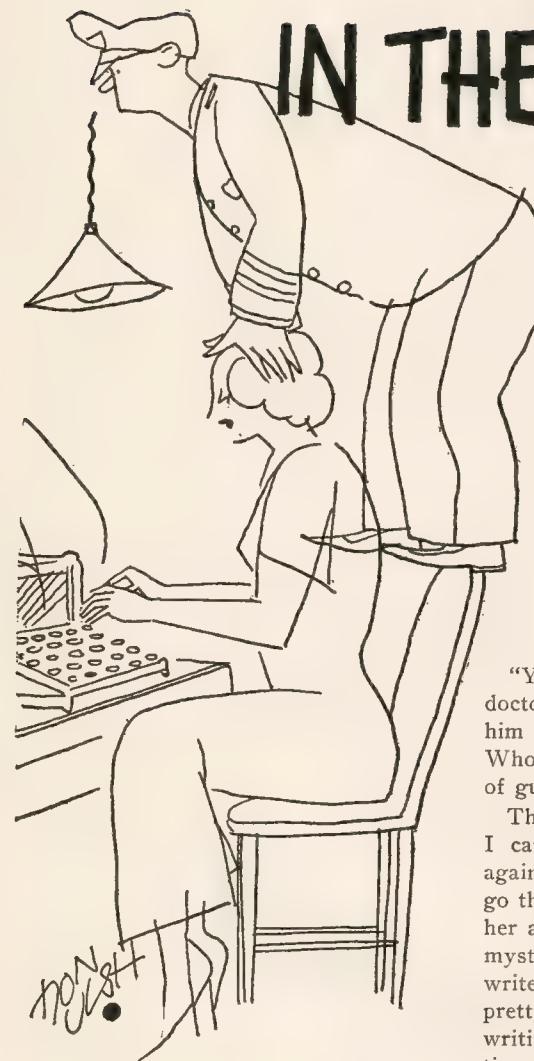
I'm sitting here on hour now, waiting for an inspiration. I've got to write a love story and it simply won't come to me. I look at my typewriter and then I look out of the window. It's more interesting to look out of the window. But my home study literary correspondence teacher says the only way to learn how to write is to write and today is my turn to compose a great romantic masterpiece. It's about ten in the morning and the view from my court window is quiet and dreamy like. Any minute now I ought to start bulging with a love story. Ah, I feel a romantic mood coming on.

There, drat her! I knew she'd spoil it. Write about the tender passions with a young hippo like that blotting out the landscape from your window. Two hundred and sixty pounds on the hoof. It's her sweet tooth, the gland specialist told her mother. I'm sorry for her mother.

That poor woman's done nothing to deserve such an infliction. Infliction? That girl's a visitation, a "dibbik." Maybe she's hit on the right solution now, Mrs. Brown. Won't give the girl another penny spending money. So she'll have

IN THE BRONX

BY CLARA CHANIN



"Yuh gotta go, Jenny. Never mind if the doctor hollers. Tell him you'll listen to him now. Can't be like this all your life. Who's gonna marry you?" I know a lot of guys who won't.

Thank Heavens they've passed. Now I can concentrate on love sweet love again. Where did the Muse of Romance go this morning? Maybe I ought to give her a rest and try my hand at a murder mystery. Wonder what kind of people write murder mysteries? Bet they're pretty mild looking, at that! Look who's writing love stories! Well, this isn't getting me anywhere. I'll try going into a trance or something.

no more sweets. You see, Fatty'll do anything but work! She's bound to get thinner now. She must be on her way to the clinic. Yep, there's her mother prodding her from behind. You see how crazy she is to go. Look at that pan! What's she done with all the medicines they've given her?

Heck, here comes the Roman Senator! Hope to goodness *she* doesn't stop. Taken a liking to me, she says, but she upsets my concentration. There's something so relentless, so potentially savage in her staring eyes, her heavy powerful face. And her walk. Like an oak tree, straight,

unswerving, inexorable as the knell of Doom. They call her Lucy. She lives alone, by what means no one has ventured to inquire but she seems forever to be stirring and mixing things in great iron pots. Like a witch. She brags to me that she has read eight volumes on the Spanish Inquisition. And that she could give a Mayan witch doctor points on jungle voodoo. She fairly drools when she starts speculating on the delights of cannibalism. And she'll sit for hours, discussing the various effects of slow poisons. Her real name is Lucretia.

She tells me dreamily how she dissected her dog. She wasn't mourning a dead pet. She was gloating over the neat job she had made. "A butcher couldn't have done it better," she bragged. Once she strangled a rattlesnake with her bare hands. It gets so that my fingers start hitting the wrong keys when I hear her heavy tread on the stair. In the midst of my tenderest passage, she'd stalk in, sink into my best lounging chair and with a deep sigh, touchingly confide how much she'd love to commit the perfect crime. "I tell you my heart's deepest secrets," she murmurs. "We have so much in common."

I lay awake one night trying to figure out what Sphinx Face and I had in common. Finally it came to me. We both dislike Jenny the Girl Mountain. She had, on a couple of occasions, robbed us to get money for sweets. She filched some change that Lucy had left lying loose on the grocery counter while both were shopping. From me the Infant Elephant begged some magazines bearing my un-

dying romances and when, flattered, I gave them to her, she promptly exchanged them for a dozen all-day suckers. I found her choking on one in a nearly-fatal attempt to destroy the evidence. Sometimes I didn't know whose acquaintance I could have more joyfully dispensed with, the Gorging Gallumpus or the Macabre Medusa's. Well, that isn't getting my love story written.

Goodnight! Little Jungfrau is coming back. Not coming, sneaking is the word. What's she up to now, looking around her so furtively? Her mother's away marketing. I'm sure she hasn't been to the clinic that quick. She's stealing up the back way too. I better look up the stair shaft. No, she's *not* going into her own house. She's on the top floor, sneaking into—well, for gosh sakes,—into Lucretia's! And Sphinx Face told me she couldn't bear her because she always smelled of cheap candy. What in the world would she be easing herself in there for? If Lucy had a son now, or something. Little Hippo (I should stop maligning innocent animals) Little Hippo isn't amorous. I once knew a fat girl who was . . . Boy, if only I was a murder mystery writer, would I put my trained imagination to work! With the material I got . . .

I'd elaborate on the way the Sphinx's bulging eyes light up when she tells me in sepulchral tones how she longs to commit the perfect crime. I think I know how she'd go about it, too. She'd snare the Midget Mountain in with some silver lying around. Then with the tremendous strength that crushed a rattlesnake, she'd

hold her down while she poured a dose of jungle poison down that fleshly young throat. Then she'd stand by watching her die in horrible convulsions. Not a soul would suspect, of course. Hadn't the girl's mother forcibly headed her in the direction of the clinic? She wouldn't dream that her blubbery offspring was expiring in Lucretia's sinister eyrie? Then Lucy, having gloated her fill at the fat girl's last agonies, would do one of three things to complete the perfect crime. She would destroy the body with corrosive acids. Or she'd cook the luscious, sixteen-year-old flesh and enjoy the long-dreamed of cannibalistic thrill. Or she'd dissect the body in the neat, expert way she had dispatched her dog. Then she'd wrap the parts up in brown paper packages and drop them piece meal over the bridge she was fond of crossing daily. Or hide them around the lumber yards where she went to catch butterflies to stick on pins. Boy, maybe I had a good murder story in that! That's what imagination does for you. And speaking of the devil, yea, *speaking of the devil*—here she comes now! The Borgian Sphinx. Coming down from the house and going out into the street. Isn't there a nervous quality in her stiff, upright walk today? She's casting stealthy looks around her. Lucky she can't see me spying behind my curtains. So we have something in common, you murderess?

Hey, what are you carrying under your arm? God, Oh God, it can't be—it is—a brown paper parcel. And her twitching gait, the frightened glances she darts around the court. Her haste to leave the building—with that brown paper parcel.

Can it be a hand or a foot, a breast or a buttock? Oh poor little fat penny snitcher. She's gone now. And I've sat by waiting for tender inspirations while she was being done to death! Knowing all the time what was going on up there—*feeling* it!

God! What am I waiting for now? Where's that damned phone? Police Headquarters, quick! I want to report a murder. While she's out—with a brown paper parcel. The rest is up in her house, the rest of the victim, I mean. Top floor, yes. Quick before—before the crime is perfect! Oh God, why wasn't I in time? Poor little magazine filcher? Wow, they're rousing the neighborhood Radio cars. Squads of blue-coated giants. Blowing, running, lumbering up the stairs! "Calling all cars. Calling all cars. 30. The number is 30." That means come with your guns drawn. I know that much at least. But what's the use now? You're too late. Yes sir, top floor. Oh God, you're too late anyway. Water. Water, somebody. Here's the victim's mother. It's nothing, Mrs. Brown. An accident in Lucy's apartment. Goodnight, here comes Lucretia again! Oh don't go, don't go, hapless mother of a never-to-be circus darling. Somebody keep her downstairs. Yes, officer, I phoned in the alarm. Yes, I know she was cooking and mixing and fussing all day yesterday. She tried to get *me* to come up here. Often. But something warned me . . . The victim? Th-the v-v-victim! Why there she is! There she STANDS! Yes, Mrs. Brown. I saw her sneak home again after you were gone! She didn't go to the clinic. Lucy? Lucy got her up here to feed her—poison—er—wasn't it? I thought she—why, Mrs. Brown, she's alive,

alive—what're you hitting her for? Hit Lucretia—Lucy! She tempted her with— Oh my God, with FUDGE! Lucy's fudge! I didn't know that was her business. I, Oh turn those banjo eyes away from me, Disaster! How did I know you lured her here to try out your new fudge on an expert? Oh, my accursed imagination! Murder mystery, indeed! I promise you, Lucy, Gentlemen of the Law, Mrs. Brown—I promise you, as God is my witness . . . From now on, from this memorable moment on—I'm going to stick to love stories!



"Listen Dear—

500 announcement cards, a wedding ring and two tickets to Niagara Falls—quick!"



EILEEN sat staring at the little bronze Buddha. He had given it to her, the old silly! He had given her so many really expensive useless gifts like that. What she wanted was money. Well, he had given her plenty of that too, had her boss, the great Cort Von Wedel. And she had given him? . . . just nothing. Oh, right recently she had gladdened his heart with a promise of marriage—the poor sweet old gullible fool. How could a hard-boiled business man such as he, believe that a girl so young and beautiful would tie herself down for life to a fat, bald old . . .

She turned from the horrific Buddha to her mirror, caressed with her wide-set baby stare the reflection of innocent beauty—that deceptively ethereal type of beauty.

Such delicate, almost pastel coloring—the chiffon soft brown hair, the baby-blue eyes, a skin so satiny sheer that the red color gleamed pinkishly through a skin that really needed no rouge. And those faintly purplish little veins in her arms and throat.

Then the eyes grew hard, seemed actually to change color—from baby-blue to porcelain-slatey-gray.

"I'll tell him tomorrow, the old silly. I can't go on this way. Reggie might think something wrong, going around with my boss." "Sweet little 'virgin'—!" she grimaced into the mirror, "that I be." She went to the telephone, called one of her gigolo friends. Yes, he was free; yes, he could come.

It was Sunday night. Reggie was up in

the Berkshires. Mr. Von Wedel had already phoned and she had pleaded a slight cold, a nasty headache. She was free for the night and safe, for although Reggie had a key, Mr. Von Wedel of course did not. She ought to have a bolt or chain put on that door—opening that way just right into her one-room efficiency. She let down the bed and lay awaiting her gigolo.

* * *

Monday, and she took her time. Arrived at the office middle of the morning. She walked into his private office. Cort Von Wedel was alone, fiddling with a great stack of mail.

"Why, um, ah, you're late, dear!"

"Yes," she said coldly, "I'm late. So what. It doesn't matter anyway. You can fire me if you like or I quit. I'm resigning. Get it?"

"But why, well now my dear . . . the other . . . why, what's the trouble?"

The poor old coot, poor old love-starved thing! She knew his wife had been an invalid, that he had always been true to her, even true to her memory for a whole year after her death. This wasn't so easy as she had thought because she had taken advantage of all that, had led him on, had definitely promised to marry him. Oh, well!

"Yes, I'm calling everything off, Mr. Von Wedel. Sorry. I'm same as engaged to a boy of my own age. That's how it is. I'm sorry. Truly sorry." She gave him her slim beautiful hand. He took it dazedly, swallowed hard, answered her careless "goodbye" huskily, sat fingering his mail absently.

And she was gone.

Later in the day, the stenographer whom he had drafted to act as secretary announced Reginald Van Swerington, Jr. Mr. Von Wedel came out of his trance long enough to greet him, the son of his very closest and oldest friend.

"I'm 'bout same as engaged, Mr. Von

Wedel. It's to your secretary. Dad says he wants me to marry for love—not any of that social position stuff, see — but thinks I ought to make certain she's okay. You know, morally. I know she is but you know how tough-minded Dad is and old fashioned—old family honor stuff and all that sort of thing. I hate like hell to be checking up on her but I promised Dad I would. He insisted I do it myself—said if your report satisfied me, it would satisfy him. And, well, of course I wouldn't marry a girl and bring her into the family if there was any question whatever and. . . ."

"No question whatever, boy." The older man cleared his throat. "Eileen Coppick is as sweet, as pure a girl, as I've ever met in my life, Reggie. She . . . she's a good girl—I could swear to that. I'll mention the matter to your father first time I see him."

"Well, er, thank you, sir. That's a little bit of all right. Thank you."

"You love her a lot, don't you boy?"

"I'm simply silly, I mean I'm just mad about her, Mr. Von Wedel."

Reggie's sister was home from finishing school, was throwing a week-end party up at the bungalow in the Berkshires.

"But, Reggie! I've just got to have you. I can't get anyone else. It's been too short notice and I'm lucky to have grabbed off Bernice and Howard and the others. I've simply got to have a partner for my roomy. You simply must come and . . . Can't you be loyal, can't your poor little steno sweetie wait a couple of days?"

"Oh, all right," grumbled Reggie. "All right, I'll come." And he phoned Eileen that he just had to fulfill this one final family obligation. Eileen did not sound too disappointed. He misinterpreted that; thought: "She's one swell little scout.

Unselfish. Utterly unselfish. She'll fit in fine in this family. When we're married. Boy! just wait till Sis sees her!"

He started packing.

Suddenly, May Jo burst into the room. "You're released, fellow! Maisie happened to think of Dolph — you know, Dolph Davenport. And I phoned him and he is free. He can come. Isn't that swell! So, you can go and see your little typist sweetie."

"She isn't a typist," growled Reggie. "She's a secretary and a darn good one."

But May Jo was gone.

Reggie reached for the phone, hesitated, did not ring. "Might as well surprise her, she'll be there this early I

know. Just walk in and surprise her."

He did just that.

He turned his key softly, walked in and surprised her in bed with one of her gigolos.

He stood speechless. Then, "But I say now — this is hardly cricket, Eileen!"

The gigolo raised up, pulled his pink pajamas about him. "No," he said with loose irony, "this is not cricket, kid. That game's played outside, isn't it? If you wanta play cricket go on outside!"

Eileen sat staring at the little bronze Buddha that Von Wedel had given her.

"The old darling! What a fool I've been! Oh, what a silly dam fool I HAVE BEEN!"



"MEN WILL BE MEN!"

(Little Creek [Mich.] Record)

In her suit for divorce filed in Circuit Court Wednesday morning, Mrs. Slowgoe alleged that her husband acted very queer from the very first day of their bedding, which took place last June.



Jacob's Wife

By Chester Chatfield



Jakob is late again. We wait for him nearly an hour, because we know how we feel ourselves if the game starts and we are not here.

There is not much to do for excitement in a little mountain town like this. For more than twenty years we have had a penny ante game every Saturday night in the back room of my barber shop. It is very important to us—to Doc and Mort and me and Jakob. There is no money in it. We talk and have a good time instead of sitting on the edge of our chairs with sweat running down our backs, like some people.

Finally Jakob comes. He is lean and beak nosed, a Swiss.

"Wife trouble, Jakob?" asks Mort. Mort is the undertaker, but he is a great kidder.

"Not any more, py Gott!" says Jakob. "Ve haff settled it now. I told her. I says: 'Gretta, this has got to stop. For twenty years you haff nagged at me because I play cards mit the poys. You haff pretended to be sick, even, and make me stay home. Now,' I says, 'it iss ended. I vill do vat I tamn please!'"

I wink to Doc.

"Sure," I says. "Until next time."

Jakob's wife is very queer. She has had a stroke, and one side of her face is twisted up. She has been quite a looker, and having her face twisted up bothers her a great deal. She will not go out of the house and will not let anyone come in except Jakob.

Jakob called Doc when she was sick one time. Doc went into the bedroom where she was, and she screamed at him

to get out. She threw a water glass at him, and she would have thrown the pitcher, but she was too weak. She would rather die than have anyone around. So Doc got out.

Doc says she is a misanthrope, which is just his way of saying she is crazy.

Jakob is a taxidermist, and has his shop right in the house. We all feel very sorry for Jakob, because his wife is with him all day long and nags him because he likes to play poker with us on Saturday night.

Jakob's wife doesn't have much to nag him about, because he is very good to her. He makes plenty of money. It is Jakob who invented the new way to mount animals with papier mache forms, and he is very famous all over the world. Some of his work is in the Smithsonian Institute. They send musk oxen from Siberia and water buffalo from India for Jakob Kamber to mount.

I don't see Jakob any more for a few days, and then Doc tells me Jakob's wife has had another stroke. Jakob has been to see Doc and get all the right dope to take care of her.

We all feel very sorry for Jakob. He gets a wheel chair for his wife, and in the evening he wheels her out on the porch where she can watch the mountains. She keeps her hand up over the side of her face that is twisted. We tip our hats when we pass, but she never speaks.

Jakob is very good to her. He buys dresses for her, and silk underwear. But now he is always on time for our little game, which is a good thing.

Jakob gets more beak nosed and gray as the years go along. We can see that Gretta's hair is turning white, too.

Jakob never complains. Tessie Snowden, who lives in the Ace Hotel, makes a

play for him because he has plenty of money, but Jakob gives her a cold eye. Everyone is very sorry for Jakob, because he is so good to his wife.

One day there is a fire in the Ace Hotel. A fire is pretty serious in this town. We don't have any fire engines. Everybody grabs a bucket and gets to work. Jakob is right there with the rest of us.

The fire gets too much of a start. Pretty soon the right wall falls out. We all get out of the way except Jakob. He is killed. It happens very suddenly, just like that.

After awhile we think of Jakob's wife, and Doc and I go to tell her. We feel very funny about this, because there is no way to tell what she will do.

She doesn't answer the door, so we finally walk in. Jakob's wife is sitting there in her wheel chair, staring at us, with her hand over one side of her face. We can see that her face is twisted up behind her hand. Doc clears his throat, very nervous. I guess he thinks she might throw something at him again.

"Mrs. Kamber," he says. "We are very sorry to intrude like this, but Jakob has had an accident."

Jakob's wife never bats an eye. She acts like she doesn't even hear us.

Doc coughs.

"He is dead, Mrs. Kamber."

Still Jakob's wife doesn't make a sign. I am watching her very closely, because I am interested in what she will say. She is dressed very neatly in a new dress that Jakob bought. Then I notice that she is not breathing.

I step up close and put the back of my hand against her cheek. It is not cold. It feels like leather.

She is stuffed. She is a work of art, but Mort insists on burying her.



The MIXED-UP CASE OF JASPERLEIGH BY JAMES L. DILLEY

I KNOW little about psychiatry and less about psychiatrists, but have learned that when a man is suffering from complexes and fixations there are often times when a layman can help him improve a situation which a psychiatrist, for all his knowledge of analysis, has left dangling in the air.

The case of my friend, Gordon Jasperleigh, is an illustration.

Gordon and I have been friends since childhood. He has taken me into the innermost places of his heart on many occasions and I, in turn, have revealed to him secrets that no one else could possibly have pried from me.

When Gordon and I left school together he started on a career as a writer and I entered the advertising business. Things prospered with me and I soon had offices on the top floor of the city's most expensive office building. Gordon, too, did well for a young writer and was soon past the early stages where he had to come around a couple of times a week and make a touch.

I bumped into my dream princess, literally, on a crowded elevated train one day and the succeeding steps were as

follows: (1) Getting her telephone number. (2) Getting a date. (3) Getting slapped in the mouth for putting my hand on her knee. (4) Getting married.

We were soon quite happy together, and still are, but Gordon couldn't seem to find a girl that appealed to him. His stories were selling in the pulp field and he was beginning to have a certain glamour about him, but the girls who were attracted to him seemed to leave him cold.

Then it happened.

Rose Rossalin, the alluring lady of moviedom, came to town and the editor of one of the fan magazines asked Gordon to interview her. He did, and was in such a daze afterward that he had to come over and give me his notes and let me write the story for him.

He paced back and forth in my office, telling me about the interview and giving me odds and ends to piece together for the magazine. How I managed to write the story for him, I don't know, for every other word he handed me was, "ravishing," "exotic," "breath-taking," "maddening" and adjectives of a similar nature, all designed to reveal that Miss Rose Rossalin had set Mr. Gordon Jas-

perleigh's pulse hammering at streamlined speed.

He frankly admitted that his spine was tingling to such an extent that he couldn't write the story if the editor were standing behind him with a shotgun. Well, I knocked it out, and after he had inserted a few additional adjectives he took it over to the magazine office.

It was published and everything was lovely except the state of Mr. Jasperleigh's mind. He was in the most complete love trance I've ever seen. All he could talk about or think about was the age-old appeal of the country's leading talkie tidbit.

"Why don't you go to Hollywood and storm the gates, become a well-known scenario writer and then win your photoplay princess?" I asked.

"I've thought of it," he replied, "but she wouldn't even notice me. During the interview the other day, in spite of the fact that one look at her gave me a temperature of one-hundred-and-ten in the shade, she scarcely knew that I was around. All she did was lean back on a half-dozen silk cushions, reveal a yard or two of the flesh they'd have in heaven if things of the flesh existed up there, and eye me half drowsily as she answered my questions."

For some reason or another all of this didn't bother me a great deal. It seemed just a natural crush on a movie star . . . the kind of crush that so often assails young writers who interview such ladies.

And, anyhow, I was busy.

"Forget it," I said. "Find a nice girl around town, settle down in a little vine-covered cottage in the suburbs, and concentrate on selling the *Saturday Evening Post* so you can buy shoes for the little Jasperleighs."

"I'll never forget her," he said, positively.

* * *

Months rolled on. Gordon still raved about La Rossalin at exasperatingly frequent intervals, but seemingly there was nothing to be done about it. I just continued to listen and hope for the best.

Then, one day, he rushed into the lounge room of my club, to which he had been directed by my secretary. He was all out of breath. Plopping himself into a chair alongside me he pulled out a snapshot.

"I've found her!" he fairly shouted.

He showed me the picture.

"Why," I said, "that's none other than your Hollywood heart-throb, the queen of pulse-disturbers, Rose Rossalin."

"Oh, no, it isn't," he replied. "But it's her double. I met her on the beach last Sunday and I'm going to marry her!"

"So soon?" I asked. "Was it love at

first sight?"

Gordon hesitated a moment.

"I don't know," he stated slowly. "It's something though . . . undoubtedly her striking resemblance to the woman of my dreams."

"And you're going to marry her? Well, well . . . how does she feel about it?"

"Oh," answered Gordon, "she goes for me in the well-known big manner. She's a swell kid, comes from a nice family and frankly admits that a home and a hubby and all that goes with it is exactly what she's looking for."

"I get it," I said. "It won't be long now."

And it wasn't. They were married, quietly, at the home of a minister, a month later. I was best man and only two or three others were present.

I later put them on the boat as they left for a honeymoon in Bermuda.

At the end of two weeks they returned and moved into a cozy little apartment uptown. My wife and I visited them two or three times. We played bridge, had highballs and discussed advertising, literature and the latest plays. Now and then, too, we discussed the movies. Gordon's wife was quite fond of the flickers and was conscious of the fact that she resembled Rose Rossalin, although she knew nothing of her husband's infatuation.

All of the time I was wondering about something. It was a delicate matter, but my curiosity was great, and one day after they had been married about three months I fenced around and finally approached the subject across a luncheon table in a little German restaurant near the office.

"Gordon," I said, "you and I have been pretty close all our lives, and I think we can discuss things that might be taboo with most friends . . . that is, discuss them

without being in poor taste . . . and well, frankly, just how do you feel about Rose Rossalin now that you're married to another woman?"

He looked at me with level eyes.

"I'm glad you asked that," he said. "In fact, I intended to bring it up sooner or later, myself. I'm going through a rather interesting experience."

I was all and three-quarters ears, so I let him continue without interruption.

"I know what you're really curious about," he went on. "It's of course the sex angle. We're modern and you know that Rose Rossalin was the first woman who ever really got me going in that way. Well, I thought I'd never be satisfied until she and I got together . . . and then I met Marjorie and married her."

He paused to light a cigarette.

"We both know that I married Marjorie for one reason . . . because she looked like my screen queen. And now, after three months of living with Marjorie I, well . . . I just hardly know."

He stopped again and seemed in thought. I wanted him to go ahead.

"I'm naturally curious," I said. "I know how Rossalin hit you . . . and I just couldn't help wondering . . ."

"I know," he said. "You just couldn't help wondering how I reacted to Marjorie after our marriage . . . how I felt when I took her in my arms . . . whether or not she satisfied me . . . whether or not I wanted my movie idol instead of my wife."

"That's it," I said. "I'm quite interested . . . it's only human of me to wonder, I suppose."

"Yes, indeed," he agreed. "Well, Tom, old man . . . I've never kept anything back from you, and I'm going to tell you something quite frankly. For at least a month after my marriage, during the honeymoon, and for two weeks or so

(Continued to page 57)

A TABLOID NEWSPAPER GLOSSARY

(Continued from page 12)

HOUSE—Any dwelling which has an elevator.

STORK — Must always be used in conjunction with "love nest," which see.

HIGH—Adjective which must be prefixed to the noun "noon" in the account of a fashionable wedding.

SNUG SUM—Any amount of money over a hundred dollars.

LOVE NEST—Any modest apartments displaying lace curtains.

CHEAT — What illegal practitioners invariably do to the well-meaning stork.

SHOTGUN — Word prefixed to all marriages where the bridegroom is reluctant, or "obstinate."

TOT—Any child under seven. In a pathetic kidnapping story the adjective "tiny" must always be prefixed.

TODDLE—Verb applied to the walk of tiny tot. See under "tot" for correct usage.

PSYCHOLOGY — All editors have this word on the tips of their tongues; an excellent word to throw around on a bad morning when nothing else occurs.

POST WAR—Designates any period during the great prohibition experiment.

TRUST—Any money not owned by the proprietor.

JUGGLE—What is always done with the funds of a bank or other institution.

OIL MAGNATE—The late John D. Rockefeller.

DEAL — Any business transaction which involves more than one thousand dollars.

DICTATOR—See Benito Mussolini.

NEW DEAL — Applied to every new change of government policy to hoodwink the public.

BURLY—Adjective always applied to male negro.

ASSAULT—The wrong man.

SCREWY — Inevitable mental condition afflicting all tabloid editors after twenty years on the same paper.

The End



LINE FORMS TO RIGHT, DOUGHBOYS!

(Elton [N. Y.] Eagle)

Miss Jessup, the hotel's chief telegraph operator, was instructed by the management to allow night mates to all American Legion guests sending day telegrams.



ANYBODY CAN WRITE A SEX NOVEL SAYS JACK WOODFORD

(Continued from page 17)

at once. I do not remember feeling that way toward the novel form when I was a beginner; but then, no amount of words ever seemed to me a lot—as you probably have gathered, throughout! I didn't write any novels until seven years ago because I knew it was the short end of the racket and I was able, before the depression, to place all the short material I could beat out; but short material gets on your nerves after awhile and you feel as though you'd like to blah and blah and blah continuously on a lot of paper without having to start all over again every thirty or forty pages.

It is said that Harper and Brothers, during the height of Oscar Wilde's fame, cabled that they would give him \$50,000 for fifty thousand words. Meaning, of course, that he might write anything he wished to that length in order to earn the sum offered. Oscar is said to have wired back: "I don't know that many words,"—a perfect retort to a Babbitt American publisher; though it may not have been Harper and Brothers—but it certainly sounds like the sort of thing an American publisher would naturally do. The most approved length, now, in the sex-novel form, is somewhere between 65,000 and 75,000 words. Sixty-five thousand words is increasingly popular with publishers; but it is best to write seventy-five thousand words at least, even if you are deliberately striving to write a sixty-five thousand word novel. The publisher will then have something to cut, and still preserve a full length novel of the approved wordage. All publishers are simply miserable if they can't cut something out of a novel. There is not a publisher in the

United States who has the slightest faith in an author's ability to write a better novel himself than the publishing house can write with the redactor's blue pencil.

Not to cut something out of a work would be for the publisher to admit defeat and inferiority; and you can depend upon it that every novel you ever write, even if you live to write as many as H. G. Wells, will have something cut out of it by every publisher who flatters you by lending his aegis to your work.

Why does 75,000 words seem to you such a lot of words? If you write ten full length short-stories, the total wordage comes to about the same, and you have considerably more trouble because of ten starts,—ten finishes—and ten separate organizations!

I had two sex-novels published in 1932. The first one, "City Limits," was 75,000 words when I submitted it to the publisher; that is, three hundred pages, the way I type. When published, it contained sixty-five thousand words. The publisher trusted me to do the cutting this time, insisting that I junk a lot of damned characterization and introspection—and he was perfectly right. The novel was published at a most inauspicious time; yet it sold to a fair profit. Even my publisher admitted that, and it is almost never that any publisher admits such a fact.

I wrote the whole novel in three days; one hundred pages, that is, about twenty-five thousand words, per day. The publisher will never forgive me for saying so.

It is said that Ben Hecht wrote the whole of his marvelously well written seventy-five thousand word mystery novel, "Florentine Dagger," in ten hours; dictating to a fast stenographer in the employ of the *Chicago Daily News*. I believe the story, and I believe almost nothing.

I am sure that the late Edgar Wallace

could and did equal that performance. I never got such a frosty stare as one time in Chicago when Wallace was there—with Harry Maule of Doubleday Page and Company, acting as trainer—doing a trained seal act on the book store circuit. Coming upon him in Schlogl's restaurant, where visiting writing celebrities usually are taken, I asked him how much of his production he turned out himself and how much of it was done by ghost writers. If he hadn't had any ghost writers at all he might have laughed and replied:

"I don't do any of it myself."

As it was he gathered himself together and snowed all over me.

cuse it please!

If you write one thousand words a day on a sex-novel—and any dumb cluck can do that—you will have your first novel finished in seventy-five days, theoretically; of course there will be days you cannot write one thousand words for one reason or another. But after you have worked up a little writing facility, it oughtn't to be any trouble at all to write two or three thousand words a day. On the other hand, if you wrote only five hundred words a day you'd still get the thing done in approximately three or four months, counting in a week's la grippe, hangovers from wild parties, and the visits of relatives. If you can't write five

FACTS

IN EVERY ISSUE OF
10-Story Book
A Startling and Revealing
"True-Fact Article"

Also 10 Fiction Stories and Girls Pictures as Always

I have no doubt that Mr. Wallace handled most of his output himself; and I think he would have experienced no difficulty in dictating an entire novel in a day if he had any reason not to loaf along and take two or three days to it.

The average author takes at least two or three months to a novel; many of them take six months or a couple of years; some longer.

For a commercial sex-novel of seventy-five thousand words I think three months is comfortable running time. I write much too fast, I know. You can certainly tell it by the way this is rattled along, but that rattle is part of my style—ex-

hundred words a day regularly, you're hopeless; go do something else—you're not fitted for commercial writing. Even a college professor of literature could write five hundred words a day, and there is nobody on earth more helpless facing writing.

But, you may remind me, you may not make anything worth while out of the novel after you have finished it, even if you sell it.

True, true—but you also *may*! If you go on clerking in the offices of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, for another thirty years, at the end of that time you will have received a total salary

increase of about fifteen dollars a week, and will fall into your grave with a gold watch presented for long and faithful service in your hand. What have you to lose? Sex-novel writing is a gamble, a downright gamble. But a fascinating one.

It is never much fun to write short-stories; but it is almost always great fun to write a sex-novel. And you *may* do what I shall limn below with one novel, and your first. And if you do, it won't be a particularly good novel either; a very fine one would draw scant attention in America.

You may send the thing off to a publisher and get back a note of acceptance. You write and ask him for \$500.00 advance royalties. He writes back and asks you to accept \$250.00 because Mr. Roosevelt has not yet worked all of his promised wonders. Several months go by while you pant and pine. Along comes a set of galley proofs. You are frightened to death by them, because you think you ought to know a lot of proofreader's symbols. Few authors know anything about proofreader's symbols; it's not a matter of the slightest importance. The printer will understand any sort of scratchings you put down to indicate corrections—all you have to do is call his attention to the need for a correction.

You return the proofs. Weeks pass; you all but die of suspense (masochism). Back come the page proofs. The printer will direct you to "make pages." And you will be scared stiff; but upon looking at the proofs you will see that the pages are already made—all you need do is take out a line here or there or add one here or there, and no matter how clumsily you do it the printer will patch it up, just as the publisher will already have patched up your clumsy grammar, with a stiff correctness that is a whole lot clumsier.

You return the page proofs. Nothing happens for more weeks. And then one

day the book is published. It will not occur to the publisher that you have the slightest interest in this fact, or the least curiosity to see what your book looks like in format. He will send your ten free author's copies after he has filled all the advance orders he has on hand.

You will fondly read your book—because it is your first—(along about the third you will be pained at the very sight of another book, after having written it and already read it over and over). You will discover some horrible errors that everybody missed. These, you will conclude—though nobody but you will ever notice them—spell ruin for the book. But, on the whole, you will be amazed at the way format has snapped up what you have written. You will begin to suspect yourself of being a very clever fellow.

The publisher will have had about twenty-five hundred copies of the book printed in "sheets." About five hundred of these copies, perhaps, will be bound at once. Some fool thing about the book catches hold, like Vina Delmar's title "Bad Girl." (Though Vina writes a sound commercial novel under her titles).

Suddenly the publisher begins to get 'phone, telegraph and letter orders for more and more of the books. He all but goes into hysterics. He has, despite all of his wisdom about the book market, put across a nifty. Nine times out of ten your book will be the last one on his list that season which he had expected would do anything; all of those he thought were going to make him rich will as usual have acquired creeping paralysis shortly after leaving the presses and gone into a coma on bookstore shelves. Your book will pay for all of these.

He hastily throws in a print-order for more copies. Dubiously the printer, who keeps the publisher going on credit, will print more copies. If he doesn't there is

no chance at all he'll ever get his back money, so he's got to keep on printing for the publisher, howevermuch he would prefer to shoot him.

Let's say it is a two-dollar book and sells a hundred thousand copies. Why did you price your book so cheaply? You didn't did you? Of course you didn't, you dear; you'd have put a price of \$3.50 at least on it. The publisher, however, never prices his spectacular sellers high enough to earn you an extra nickel or dime a book; he priced his duds at \$2.50 because he was *sure* they'd sell. Don't blame him. How could he know your book would sell spectacularly? (Don't ask me why he shouldn't have known that most of the ones he thought would sell would flop as they do on him every season).

With a sale of a hundred thousand, allowing for your graduated royalties and for group discounts you have made around twenty thousand dollars. But, in addition, with a sale of one hundred thousand you are sure to get movie bids, resulting in a sale of those rights at, approximately, now, five to twenty grand; say it's ten grand; that's thirty thousand dollars you've made, unless your publisher is a common thief and has stolen half your movie money by the terms of his contract. Other publishers are now bidding for you, offering better terms, as to the contract graduations affecting percent royalties. They offer you thousands in advance royalties, especially if you'll let them steal half of your motion picture rights. Foreign agents start asking for the foreign translation rights. Magazine editors write you for short stories. The thing goes on, if you are a flash in the pan, like what's his name, who wrote "West of the Water Tower," for a year or two, and you are fixed for life if you have any idea at all of taking care of money; or maybe, if you've really got the goods you go on and on—you can make

a hundred thousand a year; you can, in a few years make a million dollars!

Vina Delmar and I were writing side by side in the contents pages of Snappy Stories Magazine a few years ago. Now she could buy me and keep me for a pet, if she had the bad taste to want such a lug for a pet—and she's just a kid. I'm a battle scarred old misanthrope of forty hard winters and terrible summers. But Vina had something unusual which showed in even her earliest sex stories sold for a cent a word. It was, I'm sorry Vina, *knack*.

You, and you, and you, have it; I haven't. (But don't feel sorry for me. I'll get a couple hundred novels published before I die, watch and see.)

But look: suppose your sex-novel sells only eighteen hundred copies. I didn't tell you to stop everything else to write it. You can write it along on the side. Even if you are working in a department store, for fifteen dollars a week plus gratuitous insults from the floorwalker who gets twenty, you can write a few short stories each week, after you've gotten into the swing of the thing, and carry a novel along on the side; unless you have too many dates. The short stories will be your solid muscling into the fictioneer's racket; the novel will be your gambling chance. And while you are working on the novel you will be perfecting your style, your production speed; your facility with words . . . overcoming your fears of blank white paper stuck into a typewriter.

(Don't let those advertising sharks or high pressure salesmen stick you for a typewriter. You can pick up a second hand one for fifteen or twenty dollars, in these times, that's O. K. Oil it up, and trade it in at the end of the year for a better one, after you've made a little money with it.) If you can't type, you had better learn the touch system; not

the hunt and peck system. I had to learn the touch system; I did it in about a week, following the instruction book that the Underwood Typewriter Company will hand you free at any of their offices. An Underwood typewriter is no better, by the way, than any one of several others for an author. A portable typewriter of any kind is an abomination. After you learn how to go into production it will annoy you by hopping all over the table and you won't be able to get anything like what you paid for it on a trade in.

Well, have I taken the fear of the sex-

novel form a little out of your consciousness? If I haven't, go learn to play an accordion or something; if I have, let's get down to cases, in the next chapter.

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Next Month's Sensational FACT Article

**"The Neighborhood Sex Headquarters
is
The Beer Tavern"**

**As Told by a Real Tavern Keeper Who Is
Disgusted With His Job**





"Let's Play Blind Mans Buff"



The REVENGE OF SARRAS

By GEORGE BRONSON-JAMES

TRUE, Sarras, the wanderer, was sick, but Zingare had reason enough to take him in. Meeka, his wife, could feed him up, he would get well, and then he could help in the harvesting. The peasants asked money for their labor. Zingare had money, but none to pay out. The wanderer would be glad to work for his keep. Zingare fed up his hogs for market. Why not feed up a man for the harvesting? So it was settled.

Zingare did not anticipate any trouble on the score of his wife. Sarras was ill; and what fine, rosy woman like Meeka would be attracted to a sick man? Sarras was also a mere boy, looking scarcely twenty; women like men, not children. Then to crown all, Sarras was a Jew. Zingare did not have to make him confess it. The frank acknowledgment was not a confession, anyway; it was a proud avowal volunteered even before he told his name, with a quiver of nostril and flash of eye.

Meeka did not exactly like the idea of having a Jew in the house. She fixed up a cuddy for the newcomer in the loft, doing no more than duty demanded. The mattress was straw, the chair was rickety,

the little table was palsied; but the place was clean, and Sarras seemed pleased with everything. He frankly said he was glad to be as far away from the rest of the family as possible; he wanted to be alone. This suited Zingare—and Meeka, too; though she was a bit put out by his

highflown love of exclusiveness. Not that she desired his company—Heaven forbid; but it was so presumptuous in a Jew to talk that way, to extract distinction from being hoisted up into a miserable old loft to live! Said Zingare: "Don't worry about it. Just feed him up as though he were one of the pigs. We'll work him to death at harvest time and then kick him out."

Meeka certainly did her part in feeding him up.

She was a cook to brag about, and in no time Sarras was showing the effects of eating plenty of good food. No pig could have fattened more miraculously. Zingare was astonished and irritated. He said to Meeka: "Already he's a lump of lard, a gob of grease, a roll of butter. At this rate he'll be too fat to lift a hand at harvest time. So cut the rations."

It was difficult for Meeka to do this, for she was one of those women who cannot



bear to set out a stingy table. Besides, she had some pride in the matter. Sarras had complimented her—and in most elegant language—on her fine meals; and she did not want him to change his opinion. "You don't know how a woman feels about such things," she protested to her husband.

So Zingare compromised by letting her go on feeding the youth and putting him to work at the chores. He regarded this idea as an inspiration. It would satisfy the benevolent promptings of Meeka's heart; it would take some of the small "pick-up" work off his own hands and give him more time to spend in the fields, where he was needed; and it would be the means of getting some honest toil out of that lazy Jew and at the same time keep him in condition for the harvesting. "Don't worry, my dear," chuckled Zingare, rubbing his great, beefy, hairy hands, "we'll exact ten-fold payment then for all the good food (and food is money!) that goes down his greedy throat. I'll make him do the work of three men. After the harvesting he'll be junk." But Meeka did not nod in agreement as she usually did. She just gazed at him quizzically and then half frowned.

The new plan worked well enough for a day or so. Sarras did not seem to mind doing the chores; besides, he was quite handy. But when it came to cleaning out the stable (poor, overworked Zingare had let the manure accumulate on account of having more important work to do) his stomach revolted. He grew deathly sick and for several days was flat on his back up in the loft. Zingare was furious. His only consolation was that Sarras would have to let up on that cursed gorging for a while, at least.

Meeka was human; so on the second day of the youth's illness she climbed up into the loft to ask if she could do any-

thing. He was stretched on the straw mattress looking sick indeed. His cheeks were brilliantly red; the rest of his face was green; his lips were dry and almost scaly. It was quite evident he had a fever. He was surprised at sight of Meeka, but smiled a welcome.

Meeka's heart melted in pity. She had never had a child; and that healthy brute, Zingare, had not been sick a day in his life; hence, the natural compassion of her sex had never been stirred. Quite instinctively, then, she knelt down beside the boy, eager to do those little things that every woman likes to do for sick people, particularly men. She felt his pulse and looked at his tongue, then went down to the kitchen and brought back soap, towel and water and a miraculously soft pillow. She washed his face and neck and hands as if he had been a child; then she combed his beautiful black hair and put a cold compress around his aching head; then, deaf to his protests, she made him swallow a hideous, bitter herb tea which she declared would give his poor torpid liver a regular earthquake and set the sluggish bile to flowing. "And then you'll feel better than for months and weeks," she comforted him, "you'll have had such a fine cleaning-out."

He smiled hazily and dozed off. She sat motionless, watching him, wondering who he was, where he was from, where he was going, all about him. She had not noticed how handsome he was, how unlike a Jew, how like the pictures of poets. But he was so young, only a boy, a mere child, alas—and a Jew. A Jew! Well, what of it? Jews are human. They are people. Of course, she had always hated them; everybody hated them—but couldn't there be one good Jew in a thousand, a million?

Her gaze wandered around the loft and she blushed with shame for having put the boy up here instead of fixing up the

little storeroom off the kitchen for him. She arose softly so as not to awaken him, and then with sympathetic curiosity began examining the threadbare clothes hanging on the rough board wall and the strange foreign books on the shaky table. But what interested her most was a large collection of mysterious-looking nails of various sizes, all carved with hieroglyphic figures and all cruelly, inconceivably sharp at the points. In the same box were a number of odd tools and a written manuscript entitled "An Inquiry into the Kind of Nails Used at the Crucifixion." Meeka felt a thrill, then a sense of awe. He was a scholar, a great and learned man! And Zingare intended making him, him, do the work of three peasants at harvesting!

Suddenly a harsh voice came from the top of the stairway: "Meeka! What are you doing up here?"

It was Zingare. There was no suspicion in his eyes, only amazement. Meeka explained her presence in the loft easily enough. Sarras was sick; she was afraid he might get sicker and die; and that would be awkward.

"Let the Jew dog die," growled Zingare.

"Let him die after the harvesting," said Meeka.

Zingare saw the point and chuckled.

Sarras was up and around the next day attending to the chores; Meeka proved to be a magic physician. She had him clean out the storeroom and then moved him down from the loft. She added the finishing touches to the furnishing of the room herself, making it quite cozy and home-like.

Zingare was out in the fields working when the change was made, and when he came home and saw Sarras in his new quarters he was dumbfounded. But Meeka had her crafty reason: "I want him down here so he can help me with the kitchen

work; now he's handy enough to get up in the morning and make the fire. He ought to be doing more to pay for his keep."

If Zingare had thought, he would have realized that this was a very palpable subterfuge. But Zingare did not think; he had to see with his eyes, and most of the time his eyes were closed.

II.

One day Zingare's eyes happened to be open, wide, open fatally so. He had been working the fields, and on account of the prostrating heat came home earlier than usual. God or the devil (Zingare himself said it was God, Meeka insisted it was the devil) whispered to him to approach noiselessly and look inside before entering.

He looked—and saw. Thick-headed, purblind as he was, he could not help seeing.

Meeka and Sarras were standing by the table. He had his arms around her and was drawing her face toward his for a kiss. And what a kiss it would have been! Eyes were gazing into eyes; lips were pursed for lips; chest was heaving to chest. Eager for the kiss, that supreme caress, they yet were holding off, delaying the divine moment, dallying on the borderland of bliss.

They dallied too long. The kiss was never consummated. Zingare, infuriated, snorting like a beast, burst into the kitchen and tore them apart. With one hand he held Meeka. With the other he pushed Sarras three or four feet away, just far enough to swing on him with a full-sweeping blow. He then struck him flush on the nose, the blood spurted from it in a stream. Sarras dropped to the floor like a log. Meanwhile Meeka had freed one of her arms. She snatched an earthenware pot from the table and broke it on Zingare's head. The blow would have knocked down an ordinary

man; it simply maddened Zingare. He fell upon her and beat her savagely, unmercifully.

"Yes," he cried, his purple lips flecked with foam, "you'd kiss a dog of a Jew when all hell couldn't make you kiss me, your lord and master! I've begged you, threatened you, but you just laughed at me, you jade—you'd have seen me dead, yourself dead, and both of us in hell before giving me, of your own accord, the kiss that his Jew mouth was waiting to swallow! Death is too good for a hussy like you. I'll keep you alive and take it out of your hide." And he began beating her again.

Meanwhile Sarras, who had recovered consciousness, rose, seized the poker and stole up behind Zingare. The latter saw him. Throwing Meeka to the floor, where she lay like one dead, he sprang at the youth, wrenched the poker from him, then picked him up bodily and hurled him against the wall. Then he got a jug of brandy and sitting down in the midst of the havoc, celebrated his victory, the crushed Meeka on one side of him, the crumpled Sarras on the other.

He drank himself to sleep. When he awoke, Meeka was setting the kitchen to rights. She was limping and moaning with pain.

"Where's the Jew?" he growled, looking around.

"Gone," she gasped.

He brought down his fist hard on the table. "Call me master, hussy!"

"Yes, master."

"Did you kiss him?"

"No, master."

"He's gone forever?"

"Yes, master, forever."

Zingare grunted and regarded her suspiciously. "Bring the crucifix here."

Meeka went to the shelf and brought back the image. Zingare took hold of it with gingerly fingers; he had always

been an unbeliever.

"Down on your knees, jade."

"Now swear to your Jesus you'll never kiss another man as long as you live. If you do, I'll beat you again; and the next time I beat you I'll beat you to death. Now swear—with those false lips that you would have let a Jew kiss—a Jew!—a Jew of the Jews that crucified your Jesus!"

Pale, trembling, Meeka made the whispered vow.

"There's one man I'll let you kiss!" cried Zingare with a laugh. "Kiss your Jesus! Kiss his feet!"

He pressed the crucifix against her bruised and swollen lips, then suddenly with a wild, triumphant cry kissed it himself. Meeka was dumbfounded. Had he gone mad?

"No," he said, divining her thoughts, "I'm not mad. I've not even turned Christian." He chuckled. "A wonderful thought came to me, that's all. God—or maybe the devil—what matter?—told me how to make you do penance for your sin. This penance is closely connected with your Jesus, and it's such a fine sort of penance I just couldn't help kissing his feet myself in gratitude to God or the devil—whichever it was—that planted the thought in my brain." He threw the crucifix on the table, the face of Jesus downward.

Meeka was still kneeling. He gazed at her fixedly, a smile playing on his lips. "Get up," he said. "Call me master."

"Yes, master."

"There's a new priest at the church, isn't there?"

"Yes, master."

"What's his name?"

"Father Gordnik."

"Father Gordnik! Good! I'm going to see him." He took his hat and went to the door. "Meeka!"

"Yes, master."

His eyes of hate burned into her even more scorchingly than Sarras' eyes of love had done. She trembled; her heart stood still.

"I am the master, Meeka."

"Yes, Zingare, you are the master."

He chuckled. "Kiss nothing while I am gone, least of all the ground where the Jew has walked, and not even the feet of Jesus. I am to regulate your kissing henceforth and always; I will tell you what to kiss and when to kiss it. I'll have an appetite when I get back, so cook me a good supper, as good a supper as if your Jew were still here." He laughed and was gone.

The master had his supper when he came home, and his three meals the next day and the next. Meeka buckled down to work as though nothing had happened. The frightful bruises on her back and shoulders were slow in healing, but she made no complaint to the master. True, when he was away in the fields she sometimes moaned, and beat her hands upon the air, and prayed to Mary to intercede with her Son to let her die; but when the master was around she gave no sign of her suffering. She did not want to irritate him. He feared for the harvest and was surly. "Yes," he reproached her, "if you had let the Jew alone I'd have help now when I need it. These cursed peasants will bleed me dry."

He was in very truth the master. Meeka was crushed utterly. The unspeakable beating he had given her had cowed her spirit and shaken her soul. She stood in mortal dread of those brutal hands. This fear, together with her vow to Jesus, would keep her straight, the master assured himself. He was so sure of it that he soon ceased to watch her and spy on her. But he was still planning her penance—ah, yes! If the har-

vest failed him, he would still have that penance to live for, to gloat over, the penance that was to be his meat and drink, his very life itself, the penance that would serve as the supreme model for sinful kissing women for all time to come!

Meeka still had one flower left of her garden that had never bloomed, one souvenir of the dream that had never been dreamed, one memento of the kiss that had never been consummated. After Sarras had gone she had looked in his room for something he might have left, something to remember him by. And she found one—only one—of the bright, sharp, cruel nails she had seen in the box with the written manuscript on the crucifixion. This strange souvenir she would treasure always.

III.

One afternoon the Master surprised her by coming in from the fields several hours earlier than usual and gruffly ordering her to put on her black dress and go to church with him, declaring he had something there to show her. Full of vague fear, she obeyed.

It was a Saturday and many of the villagers were going to confession. On entering the church Meeka was astonished to see a large new Crucifix standing near the sanctuary railing. The figure of Christ was full life-sized. It was startlingly real, almost sickeningly so with the thorn-pierced brow, the nailed and bleeding hands, the agonized face. Meeka shuddered. Zingare smiled.

"Come," he said, "Let's go closer. I want you to see the feet of Jesus."

The church was poorly lighted and the front benches had high backs, so Meeka had not seen the sacred feet yet. Zingare led her down the aisle, then they genuflected and sat down.

The feet of Jesus were now in full view. Shapely as lilies, white as the moon save for the sinister blood-stains, they thrilled the naturally devout soul of Meeka with their martyred beauty.

"What do you think of them?" whispered Zingare.

But she was speechless. She could only make the sign of the cross.

Zingare called her attention to the large number of worshippers at the chancel. Many of them were peasants who had come in from the fields without changing their clothes, and the odors of dirt and perspiration were almost nauseating. But Meeka was not squeamish; and just now her gaze was attracted to Father Gordnik, who was entering from the sacristy. He went to the worshippers, said a few words and then pointed to the statue. They rose, formed in line, then one by one approached the Crucified One and kissed His feet.

Zingare chuckled. "That figure of your Jesus was made to have poor fools like those peasants—and you—kiss its feet. Many churches have them, and I've given this one to Father Gordnik in your name. And this is your penance, Meeka: you, who wouldn't kiss me but who would have braved hell to kiss the Jew, are to come here three times daily, every day of your life, morning, afternoon and evening, to kiss the feet of Jesus—feet that very soon will be black with the dirt and spittle from the mouths of those filthy peasants. What do you think of your penance?" he asked, triumphantly.

She did not dare to say that she thought it beautiful, wonderful, divine, for fear he would snatch this unexpected solace from her; so she put on a sad face (while her heart bounded) and went to Jesus and bent down and pressed an adoring kiss on His bleeding feet. She would have pressed ten,

twenty, a hundred, if Zingare had not been there. When she rejoined him she was weeping softly. And Zingare, the unseeing, rubbed his hands and was satisfied.

And now Meeka's strange penance began in earnest. Three times every day, morning, noon and night, rain or shine, she went to the church and kissed the feet of Jesus. For quite a while Zingare accompanied her to see that she did not deceive him. He even left his work in the fields to do this. But after a time as harvesting drew nearer and he was worried to death by those lazy peasants, who were doing no real work and yet bleeding him of all his money, he decided to trust her to go alone. Why not? She could be up to no harm; the Jew had left the country. Besides, she was a thoroughly crushed woman. She feared God; she feared Hell; she feared him, Zingare the Master! She had vowed to do her penance exactly as it had been laid down for her to do, and as fear ruled her life she could be depended upon to kiss the martyred feet even if the act meant her destruction. Thus Zingare reasoned.

He was not an observing man, but for some time he had been noticing a gradual, though striking, change in her. She was losing much of her flesh and high color. She had grown almost slender, and her face had taken on a mysterious delicacy. Her features had sharpened; her eyes glowed strangely; her feet seemed to grow smaller and daintier; even her housewife's hands had lost some of their coarseness, while her flaxen hair, always her glory, seemed twice as luxuriant, twice as golden. She dressed, too, with more care and more taste. And suddenly, tingingly, overwhelmingly Zingare realized that a miracle had been performed. Meeka was a beautiful woman, a woman infinitely desirable, more desirable than she had ever been! The feet of Jesus had made a lady of her. A lady! And she

(Continued to page 50)

THE HOBOES OF 1943

will, we hope, all be as charming as this 'un, caught "riding the rods" (at 10,000 feet) from Cleveland to Cheyenne.

Globe Photo.



(Continued from page 48)

belonged to him, Zingare, Zingare the Master!

"Come, my dear," he said one day, "give me a kiss."

She shook her head.

He tried to be jocular. "Come, my dear, you've grown into a damned fine woman, and your kisses are too good to be wasted on anybody's feet, even the feet of Jesus. Come, here are my lips—waiting. Isn't it better to kiss a live man's lips than a dead god's feet?"

But Meeka had become deathly pale. "No," she said, "never! I shall never kiss you again."

Zingare seized her wrist and twisted it. "You—you—" he began, choking with rage.

She gazed at him steadfastly. "Go ahead, Zingare, beat me, kill me, if you like. But beating me, killing me won't make me kiss you. And that's for always."

He raised his terrible arms as though to begin the beating then and there. She did not cringe; she did not move. He was dumbfounded; the awful arms lowered. What had come over her? Kissing the feet of Jesus had given her the unheard-of courage to defy her lord and master! And that was not the only miracle: her penance, instead of a thing of dolour, seemed a thing of joy; she wore her expiation not as a badge of shame, but as a decoration. This was a mystery—the Devil's own. Zingare determined to fathom it.

Late in the dusk of the next afternoon he preceded Meeka to the church and secreted himself in the confessional, whence he could see everything that happened. She was not long in coming. Immediately following her came a man. Zingare's heart beat. He strained his eyes and recognized—Sarras.

Sarras the Jew! So . . . he had come back, and all the time they had been carrying on right here in church, in the house of God! The Jew's lips, and not the feet of

Jesus, had made her the lady! A maddened fury seized Zingare. He was about to burst from the confessional and confront them in their sin, but the strange actions of the pair made him wait.

Instead of turning to greet her lover Meeka went on to the Crucifix, fell on her literally covered the sacred feet with kisses. knees and in an abandon of adoration. And Sarras? He did not spring upon her and claim those kisses for himself. He simply waited motionless in the shadows, seemingly unmoved. Zingare could not comprehend this strange passivity any more than he could the passionate fervor of Meeka's penance. Such wild kisses he himself had never tasted, no man had ever tasted. She was kissing the feet of Jesus with her heart and soul, her whole body and her body's passion, leaving on the sculptured flesh not only the imprint of her lips, but the very moisture of her mouth. The feet were wet—and not with the Divine blood!

Zingare marveled. But he was even more amazed when she suddenly sprang up and fled from the church, and Sarras, instead of following her, hurried to the feet of Jesus himself and kissed them as lingeringly, lovingly, passionately, madly as she had done.

Sarras, the Jew, kissing the feet of Jesus! What monstrosity was this? While the watcher still wondered the youth rose and swiftly left the church. Zingare hurried to the door and peered out. Was Meeka awaiting her lover? Ashamed to defile the house of God, would they hold their tryst outside? No! Meeka had already started home; already her form was dim in the dusk. Sarras, hesitated, gazed after her a moment, then turned and walked rapidly away in the opposite direction.

Zingare went home slowly, very slowly. He wanted to think; and he was stupefied yet. He was a dense man; but it did not

take him long to come to the conclusion that Sarras' motive in kissing the feet of Jesus was not a religious one. Such a thing was out of the question. Sarras was a Jew, a Jew who boasted of his Jewish blood. And he, the Jew, had kissed the feet of Jesus, the Crucified One! It was inconceivable, impossible; and yet Zingare had seen it with his own eyes. What other Jew in all the world had ever degraded himself thus? There was but one reason for this monstrous act of self-abasement, one answer to the riddle. Meeka in keeping her penitential vow had refused Sarras her lips; and he in his mad passion was perforce contenting himself with kissing something she had kissed, even the feet of a statue, the feet of a man, of the Christian's God, Jesus the Crucified One, Jesus the Jew!

And now Zingare realized why Meeka herself had kissed the sacred feet so wildly ecstatically. It was not penitence that prompted her, but passion. She loved Sarras! and rather than break her vow she was leaving the feet of Jesus wet, not with the blood from the cruel wounds, but with the literal moisture of her lips, the very essence of her being, so that her lover in kissing the feet after her could taste on them the transferred bliss! Ghastly, livid, undreamed-of penance! Mad, morbid, sub-human.

These were new fields of thought to Zingare, undiscovered countries of the emotions. He was stunned; he could only grope his way in these unfamiliar agitations of his slow and sleepy brain. But in all the maze, at the end of every vista of dim wonder one light burned brightly, steadily: Revenge! The penance he had imposed on Meeka, this woman of impure purity, this woman of saintly sin, had tragically failed. But his revenge should not! He ground his teeth as he said this to himself. He would injure her and her Jew as no pair of guilty lovers had ever been injured in the history

of the world. His vengeance must stand as hell's warning forever.

IV.

When he reached home he found Meeka quite the same as usual, silent, serene, cooking a good supper for him. And he, on his side, developed a craft that equalled hers; he dissimulated almost cleverly, veiled his hate and bitterness under sullen complaints about those dogs of peasants who didn't earn half their pay, rubbed his aching back with the cursed cheap liniment that never did him any good, and went to bed.

The next evening he went to the church, and the next. Day after day he hid in the confessional, week after week. He neglected his work; he let the harvest wither and blacken and rot in the fields. And always the lovers' performance was the same: Meeka kissed the sacred feet, Sarras would kiss them after her. Then she always left immediately, casting one burning glance at him as she hurried down the aisle. He would follow her outside, watch her disappear in the dusk and then leave in the opposite direction. Sometimes Zingare met peasants and villagers at their devotions, and on Saturdays he had to be careful not to run into Father Gordnik, who generally heard confessions then; but usually the coast was clear.

Each day he vowed that the day should be the lovers' last; he was astonished at himself for delaying his vengeance so long. But he could not make up his mind as to what form it should take. One day he would provide himself with a gun, the next with a knife, the next with a cruel black snake whip. But he felt that all these means of inflicting punishment were ridiculously inadequate; they were childish, cheap, commonplace. Physical torture was too good for the transgressors; death was infinitely too merciful. What method, then, should he use. On two points he was firmly set-

tled; his revenge must be had within the walls of the church, at the very feet of Jesus; and it must logically fit Meeka's sin.

The days went by. He was miserable; try as he would he could not plan his revenge. He could neither eat nor sleep; he grew thin, weak, ill. He avoided Meeka, everybody. Strange noises buzzed in his ears; strange pains shot through his head. He wondered if he were going mad. Perhaps; why not? And when at last he fell on his knees at the feet of Jesus to pray, to pray that he might be given the guidance of Heaven—or of Hell!—in smiting his hussy of a wife as the God of Wrath—or the Devil of Torment—would have it done; when he, Zingare, knelt at Meeka's altar and called on Meeka's Lord, he smiled grimly, wanly, and told himself that in very truth he was mad, mad as he could be!

But as he knelt there, his lips mumbling blasphemous words rather than prayerful ones, his fevered gaze resting on the feet of Jesus, those divine feet the red of whose wounds had been kissed to white, the white to gray, he felt himself moved by a strange, compelling, madly seductive idea. It stole over him slowly, insinuatingly, then, bursting upon him like a storm, left him trembling and wonder-struck. It was the miraculous thought he had been waiting for, the inspiration from Heaven—or from Hell—and with a wild cry and a wilder laugh he leaped up and rushed out of the church, his prayer answered.

He went at once to Father Gordnik and told him that the beautiful statue of Jesus was getting dusty and soiled, that it should be covered with a black cloth as a mark of care and reverence, leaving only the feet exposed to receive the adoring kisses of the faithful. The priest was touched by this unexpected piety on the part of the unconverted Zingare and promised that the request should be granted.

The next day the statue, cross and all

was covered with the black cloth; only the feet of Jesus showed. Zingare, watching from the confessional, noted Meeka's surprise. She did not disturb the cloth, however. Neither did Sarras. What mattered to them the rest of the Divine Form just so they still could kiss the feet?

On the evening of the next day Zingare, excited, pale as death, breathing in spasmodic gasps, the livid light of madness in his eyes, arrived at the church earlier than usual. In the pocket of his loose blouse were two knotted loops of stout hemp rope. He hurriedly took off his heavy shoes and socks in the confessional, then went to the Crucifix, climbed upon the chancel railing and slipped one of the hemp loops over each of the arms of the cross. Then he covered the whole thing again with the black cloth, this time even the feet of the figure. Creeping in behind the cloth, he leaned backward against the cold body of the sculptured God and slipped one powerful arm through each of the loops on the cross. He had calculated right; only his feet now showed. They—the real feet—rested on the railing nearly where the feet of Jesus had been. The feet of the statue, higher up, were now covered with the cloth.

Zingare waited, chuckling. He was sure they would not know the difference—at least see the difference, as the church was dark, with only the red-globed sanctuary lamp burning. If he could stand perfectly still, supporting himself by the loose loops through which he had thrust his arms, holding the pose of the feet of Jesus . . . ! He could not hope to rival their marble of coldness, and feared that the warmth of his flesh might betray him. Yet his feet were feeling like lumps of ice.

The plan of the madman was very simple. He would receive the adoration of the lovers and then leap down and slay them

(Continued to page 54)



"NO MEN ALLOWED"

the above signal is supposed to say, in the standard sign language done with hands and a shawl. The whole picture looks to us as though it's saying "Boys, boys, where are you?"

Century Photo.

(Continued from page 52)

at the alter of their guilt.

They came at the usual time. At the pressure of Meeka's hot lips Zingare felt an indescribable, inhuman, unhuman sensation. He thought he must move, fall from the railing, bring down the sculptured Jesus with him. But he managed to stand motionless; and Meeka in her mad ecstasy was unaware of the monstrous cheat.

And now for those other lips, the lips of the Jew. This was to be the madman's supreme vengeance, his supreme thrill. After the first kiss he would reveal himself, taunt Sarras with his unspeakable shame and then. . . .

But what was this? If the sensation imparted by Meeka's lips had been bliss, this was delirium And in a flash Zingare decided he would not kill them—yet. He would wait; he would experience more of this wild joy, this unheard of revenge. He would prolong it; he would come here every day, many days. His feet should take the place of the feet of Jesus; let them, rather than God's, be the medium of their illicit love!

What—? Only one pressure of the lips? Why was Sarras hesitating, holding back? Had he discovered the substitution? Zingare peered out through a tiny hole in the cloth. Sarras was leaving the church! But the madman chuckled. The Jew would return—tomorrow, a dozen tomorrows, a

hundred tomorrows!

The next evening Zingare repeated his performance. He climbed upon the railing, took his position against the sculptured Diety, slipped his arms through the loops and covered himself with the cloth, leaving his feet exposed.

He had not waited long when there was a sound of someone entering the church. He peered out from behind the cloth and was surprised to see Sarras. No matter; Meeka would be coming in a moment.

He waited, intoxicated in the bliss of it, trembling in spite of himself. This cursed ague would betray him

Ah, something had touched his feet, something even colder than they, something sharp, metallic. God, God! Nails! His feet were being pierced with nails, like the feet of Jesus. He gave a wild cry; he struggled vainly back of the cloth. His arms were hopelessly entangled with his cunning loops of rope; he would have leaped down; but he could not. Those nails! They were piercing his feet, his hands, his heart. Was it a dream? Was it death? Was it Hell? He did not know. He did not know anything . . . except . . . this . . . this . . . this . . .

In the morning they found him dead, crucified, even as Jesus was crucified, nailed to the cross with countless bright, sharp, cruel nails, nails unlike any others in all the world. And his weight, added to that of the imaged Jesus, had borne the cross to the ground.



A chivalrous boss is one who doesn't leave the office until he helps the steno put the typewriter back on the desk where they took it from.



"Yes, I bought my fur coat on time—and what a time it was!"



THIS IS NO. 13

of Betty Grable's daily dozen exercises. (The easy one!) Dancers and truckdrivers, you know, have to keep in trim!

Globe Photo.

THE MIXED-UP CASE OF JASPERLEIGH

(Continued from page 34)

afterward . . . I was, well, badly disappointed. I didn't enjoy our relations in the slightest. It was terrible. It upset me. I realized that I had merely married a substitute for the woman I really wanted, and I was cold every time I held her close to me. She seemed to want me badly enough, and has displayed the utmost affection ever since we've been married, but during those first four or five weeks I was . . . just . . . a husband doing his duty."

"Go on," I urged. "Then what happened?"

He laughed.

Then, he said, "I did something that probably isn't new. Scores of husbands deprived of their real or fancied soul-mates have doubtlessly done the same thing. I simply started *imagining* that Marjorie was Rose Rossalin. Every time I made love to her I closed my eyes and let a mental picture of Rose, as I saw her the day I interviewed her, fix itself firmly in my mind. And it's been fairly easy, since Marjorie is so nearly her physical double."

"The results?" I asked.

"Why," he replied, as he flicked the ashes from his cigarette, "they've been surprising . . . but I'm still up in the air. Since I started imagining that Marjorie is Rose every time we embrace each other, I've known a gradual improvement in the sense of pleasure extracted from our relations. In fact, here of late, Marjorie thrills me amazingly. I no longer have to do much imagining. It's actually as though I were with Rose Rossalin."

"Then," I said, a bit relieved, "it looks as though you'll have a happy married life and put the celluloid siren out of

your mind completely in time to come."

He sighed a bit.

"No," he said. "All of this has given me a strange mental quirk. While I'm beginning to know unbelievable ecstasy with Marjorie, I realize that the woman I really crave is still Rose Rossalin . . . that *she* is the one who is actually giving me my pleasure. Marjorie is only affording it as a sort of proxy."

"And what are you going to do about it?" I inquired.

"Why," he said, "I hate to tell you this . . . but I'm going to Hollywood and try to win the woman I really want. I'll never be happy until I have the genuine article instead of a substitute."

"But your wife?" I asked. "What about her?"

"I know," he answered. "That part of it's not so hot. But Marjorie is a broad-minded, understanding person, and I believe that once I explain it to her she'll understand and give me my freedom. I don't know quite how to break it to her . . . but there'll be a way . . . and I'll go mad if I don't some day hold my *real* love in my arms. There are bids from the coast for movie rights on my last novel, and well . . . now I've got a chance."

"I wish you luck," I said, crisply.

It was a bit too much for me. I called for the check and paid it.

* * *

And now, after all this step-ladder of words leading up to the truly unusual phase of the story, I find that I must condense the events that followed if I am to put them in anything short of a book-length novel.

In brief, here is what happened.

Gordon went to Hollywood. Marjorie went to Reno. My wife and I had stayed away from them for quite some time and we didn't know how the divorce had been arranged, but nevertheless in a few

months Gordon was a free man. That is, he was free from everything except the chains of his desire for Rose Rossalin.

But he was soon to unshackle them.

The movie adaptation of his novel was a great success and he was hired at one of those impossible Hollywood salaries to do two stories a year especially for the screen, for a five-year period.

Shortly after signing this contract he had his first real get-together with the sex-dream of twenty million male movie fans. He wired me:

"Was out with her last night STOP She's even more marvelous than I suspected STOP Guess what STOP I have a chance STOP Two to one she is Mrs. Jasperleigh inside of a Month STOP"

And I'd have lost if I'd bet him. You all remember the story of the wedding. It was one of those super-colossal movie affairs with every leading luminary of picture-town in attendance.

And you remember the story of the honeymoon that followed. As you will recall, they chartered a yacht and cruised in the South Seas for two months while every guy from sixteen to sixty in the United States lay awake nights envying Gordon Jasperleigh.

Since a detailed description of their activities in Hollywood after their return is of no importance to this story I'll let it pass and move on to my next meeting with my old friend, now one of Hollywood's highest paid writers, and the husband of the glamorous Rossalin.

* * *

I received his wire that he would be in town and was on hand eagerly to greet him at the train. I managed to get through the reporters and photographers, somehow, and get hold of his arm as he swung down from the steps of the train.

If anything, I was even more curious for a second talk with him . . . a talk on

a certain subject. You can understand, I'm sure.

So, I rushed him into a taxicab and accompanied him to his hotel. Then, after I'd helped him establish himself in his room, I suggested drinks in the hotel bar . . . a quiet spot that I frequented at intervals.

He agreed and we went down and had a waiter show us to a corner table where we could talk undisturbed.

Across a couple of martinis I got my first real look at him since his arrival. I noticed something strange. An expression of puzzled dissatisfaction, instead of the one of ecstatic happiness I had expected to see, was in his face.

He sat and looked at me a minute.

"I know what you're wondering about," he said. "But first of all, tell me something. Marjorie's back in town, isn't she?"

I was surprised . . . and hesitant.

"Marjorie?" I asked. "Why, yes, but haven't you heard from her?"

"No, not a line," he replied, somewhat glumly. "I gave her a cash settlement at the time of the divorce and haven't heard from her since. Where is she . . . what's she doing . . . where's she living . . . how can I . . ."

"Just a minute, old man," I restrained him, "just a minute. Why all the concern about Marjorie? What about you and your present wife? Isn't one wife at a time enough for you . . . especially if she's the exotic queen of all the universe?"

"Nuts!" he exclaimed, "But of course you don't know what it's all about and we'll go into that in a minute. But . . . Tom . . . tell me . . . where's Marjorie?"

"Marjorie," I said, slowly but firmly. "is married to one of the city's most brilliant young attorneys. She's been married to him quite some time. As a matter of fact, they've been married long

enough to have the cutest pair of twins you've ever laid eyes on. My wife and I drop in on them occasionally."

He sat as though he had been cuffed across the mouth. He looked at me blankly.

"I was afraid of that," he said. "Serves me right. Well . . . that's that. Drink up and let's have another one."

"Slow down," I said, "and end this suspense. In other words, pal, what the blithering hell is wrong with you . . . what happened . . . what took place . . . what's eating you . . . and . . . well, let me hear something."

He finished his drink and ordered another one, paying not the slightest attention to my admonition. He downed the second one, ordered a third, and with it in front of him he folded his arms on the table and started talking.

"Tom," he said, "I know all your questions, so you needn't bother asking them. I'll just sit here and give you the answers."

"I can hardly wait," was my reply.

"Well," he continued, "during the three years I've been married to Rose Rossalin I've been literally the most miserable person in all these forty-eight states."

I lifted my eyebrows.

"I know," he said. "I married my dream queen and I should be the happiest guy extant . . . but we'll get to the nub of the thing quickly. The first night of our honeymoon I found that the woman I thought would thrill me to the moon and back left me as cold as the front door of an igloo. After dreaming and yearning and yearning and dreaming . . . after wanting and longing and longing and wanting . . . after leaving a wife and think of Marjorie the last evening who thrilled me simply because I imagined I was with someone else . . . after all that . . . I go to the woman I

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thought I really wanted . . . win her . . . marry her . . . and then find that I'd give anything on earth to be back with my wife."

Through the whole thing I was beginning to see a faint glimmer of daylight. Something I couldn't put my finger on, but here was a case truly remarkable. I saw that he wanted me to say something.

"It beats anything I ever heard of," was my comment. "You fall in love with a movie queen . . . marry a woman because she looks like the screen lady . . . get utterly no thrill or enjoyment out of the girl you marry until you *imagine* she's the other woman . . . then your wife thrills you to death because you imagine she's the movie darling . . . then you crave the movie woman because she's the genuine article and should thrill you twice as much as the substitute . . . you divorce the substitute . . . marry the original . . . and the original leaves you cold and you want the substitute again. On the face of things it doesn't make sense. But tell me. Are you cold toward Rose Rossalin only physically? Or is there also incompatibility?"

"We're almost perfect mates otherwise," he said. "In spite of what people think about Hollywood ladies, well . . . Rose was a virgin when I married her. She comes from a fine family, is well-educated, refined and interested in my work. Willing to give up her career for mine at any time, in fact. Wants babies . . . is a normal, loving wife . . . but, dammit . . . the one thing I thought she'd give me . . . the physical satisfaction a man of my temperament must have . . . has been totally missing. Of course, I understand it, but . . ."

"You understand it?" I asked. "What do you mean?"

"Well," he answered. "I went to one of the country's most eminent psychiatrists. He spends a lot of time in Holly-

wood . . . Dr. Van Sangsbyrd is his name. Has a lot of clients among movie people. He was tremendously interested in my case and gave me an analysis. He explained the whole thing to me . . . I understand it all now. And the main trouble, as the doctor explained it, is quite simple. So simple, in fact, that it's funny."

"Let's have it," I urged.

"As you recall," he said, "during the first few weeks of my married life with Marjorie, when she was just Marjorie and nothing more, she left me cold. Then when I *imagined* she was Rose Rossalin she took me to the heights. The psychiatrist saw through this immediately. He explained that after picturing Marjorie as Rose Rossalin, she actually became Rose Rossalin . . . that is, she became built up in my subconscious as Rossalin herself and gave me all the thrills I had mentally desired from the woman of the screen."

"I get it," I said, "but go on."

"Then," he continued, "when I married Rose Rossalin . . . her physical resemblance to my wife *caused me in some manner to imagine that she was Marjorie* . . . the Marjorie of those first weeks of my first marriage! And it's the truth, so help me. It's all twisted around. It's hopeless, I guess. I'm crazy to be with Marjorie again . . . but she reminds me of the woman I now have! And I can't stand the woman I now have because she reminds me of the Marjorie I knew during my first honeymoon!"

"But tell me," I asked. "About Marjorie as she stands just now . . . that is, forget that you were ever cold toward her at first . . . think of her as she was when you divorced her. Is she the one you crave? Just forget all complexes you were with her. Would you like to have her again . . . hold her in your arms?"

GIRL PARADE

Volume 5



Published

April 1st and October 1st

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"Would I!" he exclaimed. "I'd give anything in the world. Yes, the Marjorie I divorced, regardless of what mental processes of mine created her, is the only woman in the world who could thrill me a dime's worth."

I thought a minute . . . then I snickered.

"What are you laughing at?" he asked.

"Oh, nothing," I replied. "But tell me. Didn't the psychiatrist suggest a cure?"

"No," said Gordon. "He just gave me the analysis and a look of pity and collected five hundred dollars and sent me on my way."

"Well," I said, "I'm not going to charge five hundred dollars, but I'm going to tell you how to straighten the whole mess out."

"But Marjorie's married to another man," he said.

"I know it, sap," I retorted, "but

what's that got to do with it? You amaze me. Why, a child could tell you what to do."

"Well?" he asked. "Why keep me in suspense?"

"Go back to Hollywood," I told him. "Take your beautiful, alluring, exotic wife, Rose Rossalin, screen siren deluxe, into your arms. Hold her close . . . shut your eyes . . . *then picture Marjorie mentally as she was the last night you were with her . . .*"

"I get it," he shouted. "And, by gad, you're right . . . yessir . . . well, I'll be . . . what's been ailing me these past three years, *anyhow?* All I have to do is work the same stunt on Rose that I worked on Marjorie. In a few months Rose will be Marjorie . . . and I'll have the old thrill again."

"Yes," I said. "Rose will be Marjorie and Marjorie will be Rose and both of them will be somebody else . . . somebody



The smoke has me dizzy dear — I see spots before my eyes.

you've imagined . . . a mentally created dream woman . . . but regardless of which is which or what's what . . . forget Marjorie and her twins and go back to the woman who's willing to give up her career for you. Imagine her to be Marjorie . . . imagine her to be Cleopatra . . . or better still, imagine her to be the Rose Rossalin you met during that fan magazine interview, and if you're as good at that sort of thing as you were with your first wife, everything will come back to normalcy. That is, everything but your blood pressure!"

"She is a dazzling creature, isn't she?" he asked, his mind far away.

"Who?"

"Rose Rossalin, of course!" he said, as he raised his third martini in the direction of a mouth that was spreading into a smile of anticipation. "I'm returning to Hollywood by plane tonight!"

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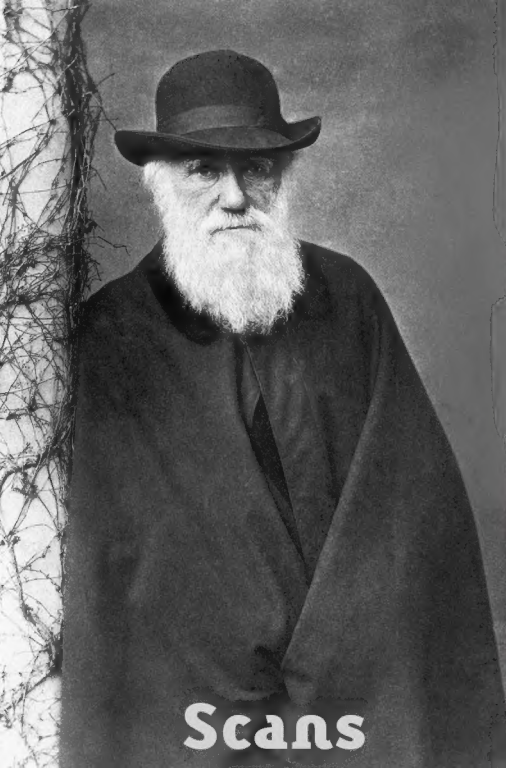
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